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DAME FASHION

FASHION IN 1897

"PORTRAIT OF A LADY"

FROM A PAINTING BY THE AUTHOR

EXHIBITED AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY, 1907, AND PARIS SALON, 1908

DAME FASHION

PARIS—LONDON
(1786—1912)

BY

JULIUS M. PRICE

WITH 155 COLOURED PLATES AND COPIOUS APPENDIX

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"Fashion is the great governor of this world. It presides not only in matters of dress and amusement, but in law, physic, politics, religion, and all other things of the gravest kind. Indeed, the wisest of men would be puzzled to give any better reason why particular forms in all these have been at certain times universally received, and at other times universally rejected, than that they were in or out of fashion."

FIELDING.

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PREFACE

IN undertaking this work I must confess that I had no conception of the magnitude of the task before me. Of works of reference on Costume, published in England, their number is legion, but all, without exception, treat the subject from its picturesque aspect only, and even then do not extend their information beyond a certain point. The periods usually covered present the familiar aspects which are, at the present date, but of historical interest. The modern epoch, dating from the period when most of these works terminate, and to which I have endeavoured to devote special attention, surely presents facts and data of interest which will grow in importance as this century advances, and for that reason, I hope, I can claim to have exploited entirely new ground. Moreover, the feminine aspect presents, to my mind, an additional charm, and is sufficiently interesting to justify its being treated as a subject per se, whilst the historical summary of the surroundings and influences which have had so great a bearing on the evolution of Fashion must, presumably, be of equal importance.

In illustrating my work with contemporary plates, in spite of the temptation to execute the drawings myself, I was actuated by the idea of giving the accurate local colour and characteristics which only prints of the period can convey, and which also undoubtedly give, not only authority, but pictorial value to the text.

I am indebted to the *Queen* newspaper for the right to reproduce some of their more recent fashion plates, to many Government officials in London and Paris who have courteously given me access to documents of invaluable assistance, to Mr. Theodore Lumley and Mr. Walter Lumley for placing at my disposal their collection of books and prints of old London, and to Mr. Charles Jerningham ("Marmaduke") for some interesting information concerning London Society in the 'seventies.

J. M. P.

22, GOLDEN SQUARE, LONDON, W.
January, 1913.

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APPENDIX.

DAME FASHION

CHAPTER I

IN any investigation of the precepts which have governed feminine fashion, it will be found that, in every country and at all periods of time, the mind of woman has been strongly affected by the trend of events and by the ethical atmosphere of her own time, and, consciously or unconsciously, has formulated a record of history in her mode of dress. Though she can scarcely be credited at any period with having individually selected this mode or that, we find that, whatever the prevailing influence, be it peace or war, austerity or dissipation, it has been faithfully and almost intuitively expressed in feminine fashion. In no country have these feminine traits been more marked than in France, where the normal temperament of the nation is of intense susceptibility; and, since Paris may be said to have always dominated the world of fashion in its extreme variations, one must give the Parisienne and her entourage the first place in a study of the subject.

With these premises let us examine, in the first instance, the conditions which prevailed in France in 1786, from which period may be said to date the evolution of modern feminine fashion. A view of French life at about this time offers much that is worthy of study, from the unusual and exceptional elements that chequered its course, and

1786-1789.

1786–1789. which are not likely to recur. France was on the verge of bankruptcy, there was neither money nor credit, and there was a state of corruption at the Court which nothing seemed

Louis XVI. able to curb. The weak King was entirely under the domination of the Queen and her favourite minister,

Calone, "The Enchanter." Calone—"The Enchanter," as he had been nicknamed—whose sole idea appears to have been to pander to her every whim and extravagant caprice.

Marie Antoinette. Endless were the tales of the depravity of Marie Antoinette. Her passion for card-playing was known to every one; her adventures and intrigues were the subject of ribald conversation in all quarters of Paris; her clandestine visits to the dissipated night-haunts of the Capital in company with her bosom friend, the dissolute Madame de Polignac, were open scandal,—all, in fact, combined to explain the evil reputation which she bore amongst the populace, and it can be safely averred that no woman who ever shared a throne was more despised than Marie Antoinette at this period. The corrupt atmosphere of the Court permeated the whole of the social life of the time, and one has to revert to the most licentious days of the Roman Empire to find a parallel to

Callous profligacy of the aristocrats. the cold-blooded insouciance and reckless profligacy of the French aristocrat of these years. The noblesse continued with unabated fervour its life of pleasure, utterly without feeling for the people, who laboured under iniquitous taxation, and remained totally indifferent to the appalling condition of semi-starvation which surrounded it.

Notwithstanding the perilous state of affairs in the country, amusement and fashion predominated over all other questions, and, in spite of the ominous signs of the times, persisted in monopolising the undivided attention of the Court. Balls and fêtes, in Paris or Versailles, were being continually given, and at all these there was an

extravagance of ideas and costumes which was to be epoch-marking. 1786–1789. Fashion in Paris.

Court-dressmakers took a prominent part in the life of these days, and quite one of the celebrities of the time was Rose Berthin, the famous modiste. Attached at first to the House which was privileged to supply Marie Antoinette and her Court, Mademoiselle Rose, by reason of her taste, beauty, and personality, made a great impression on the leaders of the fashionable world of Paris, ending by becoming a special favourite of the ill-fated Princesse de Lamballe. Later on during the Revolution, she had the opportunity of showing her gratitude for all the kindness she had received in former times, by refusing to apply for payment for the large amount owing to her from the Queen. Rose Berthin, the Court-dressmaker.

Curiously enough, fashions in Paris in 1786 were chiefly à l'Anglaise. Apple-green and marigold-coloured satin, striped alternately, was very prevalent, with plain gauze ruffles. Under robes of this description was worn a transparent muslin petticoat with a double fulness, over rose-coloured satin. Round the waist would be worn a triple girdle made of broad marigold ribbon edged with black and fastened in front with a large buckle, divided in two parts and forming medallions of polished steel or enamelled in blue or yellow and painted with a variety of devices. Shoes would be of the same colour to match the dress, and would be ornamented with large white roses. There never was a time when buckles were in so great a demand or of so great variety in pattern. An oval buckle, ornamented with all sorts of musical instruments, such as a guitar, flute, hautboy, mandoline, clarionet, or else with books, was the rage. Another buckle was of a lozenge shape made very plain in contrast to the former, although it was remarkably elegant. They were of an enormous size and often hid the shoe.

Fashions in Paris à l'Anglaise.

Various dresses.

Buckles in Fashion.

1786–1789. Fashion in Paris.

Gauze handkerchiefs round the neck.

A characteristic feature of the fashion was large white gauze handkerchiefs trimmed with lace, much puffed out, worn round the neck and fastened under the chin. Large cravats made of gauze and fastened with a rose in front were also worn.

A singular custom.

To enter even the gardens of the Tuileries when the Court was in Paris, full toilette of the most elaborate description was necessary, and there was a singular custom that when a lady had attained what was known as her "eighth lustre," or, to put it more prosaically, her fortieth birthday, she was expected to wear a black lace cap, worn under the bonnet, and tied beneath the chin with strings.

Hair-dressing.

The hair, when not powdered, was dressed in large detached curls, falling on either side of the neck à la Conseillière, and tied in the middle with a pin à la Cagliostro.

Favourite head-dress.

A favourite head-dress was the bonnet à la Turque, the band of which was in pleated marigold satin, to match the dress. The upper part was made of plain gauze very high and full, and usually ornamented with large feathers, thus completing a not unpicturesque costume.

Excessive use of feathers in the hair.

Yet another vogue of the time was the excessive use of feathers to decorate the hair, a fashion which was carried to an exaggerated extent by Marie Antoinette. It was said that when she and the ladies of her Court passed along

At Versailles a forest of feathers.

the gallery of the Palace of Versailles, one only saw a forest of feathers raised a foot and a half above the heads, and waving in unison with the footsteps. Bonnets and hats also were so extravagantly trimmed with feathers, that the carriages were not high enough to hold them, so that the seats had to be lowered, or the occupants had to kneel. These articles of fashion caused a great deal of discontent, and many were the rumours that they would, if continued,

Extravagant cost of feathers for hats.

ruin the ladies of the Court, as frequently these feathers would cost as much as two thousand livres each.

1787

Fashion was in one of its most callous moods, and the infection of it spread even to London. Between the years of grace 1780 and 1785, as though in coincidence with the state of affairs in Paris, female dress in the fashionable world of London reached its zenith of profuse expenditure and absurdity, and was the subject of endless caricature and satire by contemporary wits, as for instance the following sample of the peculiar humour of the age:

1786–1789. Fashion in London.

Fashion in London at this period.

"Give Betsy a bushel of horse-hair and wool,
Of paste and pomatum a pound,
Ten yards of gay ribbon to deck her sweet skull,
And gauze to encompass it round.

"Of all the bright colours the rainbow displays
Are those ribbons which hang from her head;
And her flounces are adapted to make the folks gaze,
And around the work are they spread.

"Her cap flies behind for a yard at the back,
And her curls meet just under her chin;
And those curls are supported to keep up the jest
With a hundred instead of one pin.

"Her gown is tucked up to the hip on each side;
Shoes too high for to walk or to jump,
And to deck the sweet creature complete for a bride,
The Cork-cutter cut her a Rump.

"Thus finished in taste while on her I gaze,
I think I could take her for life,
But I fear to undress her, for out of her stays,
I shall find I had lost half my wife."

For forty years costume had been passing through peculiar stages of grotesque and unlovely development. The hooped skirt, a revival of the mode of the time of Queen Elizabeth, was the height of the fashion in England and France, and emulated and even surpassed in its inelegance the most outrageous styles of the Middle Ages, with none of their picturesqueness. To such an extent did the ridiculous fashion monopolise the attention not only of the

The hooped skirt.

1786–1789. Fashion in London.

followers of fashion, but the ordinary citizen, that we find serious London journals of the period giving long and almost scientific dissertations on the subject, whilst many also were the quaint arguments raised in the fashionable papers for and against the "Hoop," as it was popularly named.

The origin of the hooped skirt.

The origin of the cognomen, and the curious thesis propounded by one writer in particular, are worth repeating "Hoops," he says, "are of much greater antiquity than is generally supposed. They were first worn by the Greeks and Romans. When Queen Elizabeth donned a hoop it

The "Farthingale."

was called a 'Farthingale.' It gave rise, we are told, to scandal, but to keep her Majesty in countenance the whole Court assumed big bellies, which soon became the general pink of the mode. When innovations of any kind are introduced it is very difficult to know to what degree they may be carried. This has been the fate of this very petticoat, which from its circumference originally took the name

The "Hoop."

of a 'Hoop,' but which, at present extending itself into a wide oblong form, has nothing but its name left of the familiar 'Hoop.' When we consider what alterations have been made in the lower part of the female dress, and think of the different figures which our great-grandmothers made with their petticoats clinging about their feet from the ladies' spreading coats of the last age, it admits of a dispute whether the old habit was more modest, or the modern more polite."

The controversy with respect to the "Hoop" and the clinging petticoat.

It is manifest that the controversy on this delicate subject was of no ordinary character. In fact at one time it amounted almost to an agitation in favour of the revival of the clinging petticoats which had been so strangely superseded. Many curious and quaint reasons were on the other hand put forward in support of the retention of the "Hoop": in one, for example, which strikes one as being particularly original, the writer of the argument remarks that the circular hoop gave the feet a freedom of motion,

1788

showed the beauty of leg and feet which played beneath it, and gained admirers when the face was too homely to attract the heart of any beholder. Another polite defender of the "Convex populo," as it had been jestingly named, stated that he had observed in its favour that it served to keep men at a proper distance, and that a lady within its circle seemed to govern as in a reserved enclosure, sacred to herself: a somewhat fanciful description of a skirt, to which in reply it was pointed out very tersely by probably some cynical misogynist that it was well known that many ladies who wore hoops of the greatest circumference were not always of the most impregnable virtue. There were not wanting indications that the end of the particularly graceless mode was at hand, and so events proved, as will be seen.

1786–1789. Fashion in London.

The "Convex populo."

Whilst the warfare between the "Hoopists" and the "Petticoatists" was proceeding, something new in the shape of a "novelty" diverted the attention of the fashionable world in England from the controversy. This new attraction was nothing more than that humble but useful bye-product of the farmyard—straw. For some time previously it had been extensively used in France for various articles, but it was left to London to make it quite the rage for the moment, and, curiously enough, a rage which has survived to this day almost every other fashion. Accident has frequently brought about circumstances of importance, and the application of straw in the manufacture of articles of attire, though perhaps originally a matter of necessity, was the means of introducing a very curious and beautiful production, which, starting modestly at first at Dunstable, eventually reached the Metropolis and assumed huge proportions. The extraordinary hold this new industry obtained in England in a comparatively short time, was such that it was gravely stated by a prominent writer that

Straw introduced as a "novelty."

1786–1789. Fashion in London.

this apparently trifling article was as much use to the nation as at least one of its most glorious campaigns.

Everything ornamented with straw.

We are told that everything was ornamented with straw at this time, from hats to shoe-buckles. The goddess Demeter seemed to be the favourite idol for the moment of the fashionable world. Ladies of fashion even went so far as to wear straw coats, which were named "Paillasse" and were originally manufactured in France. In fact, it would be difficult to enumerate a tithe of the uses to which straw was put, such was its vogue for a short time. When the first rage for the tegument subsided, it developed into an ordinary manufacture of utilitarian rather than fashionable importance. Hats of foreign make, and known as "Leghorn Chips," were imported from Italy, and what had started as a mere caprice in fashion, gradually developed into one of the most important industries of the world.

Straw coats, "Paillasse."

Fashion in Paris. "Leghorn Chips."

In the meantime an agitation which had been brewing for some time now threatened to bring about a most important revulsion in feminine fashion. This was in favour of the abolition of the head-dress, that towering mass of powdered hair which had for many years been considered the very acme of attractiveness by women of fashion. For some time it had been known that the building up of these head-dresses necessitated the use of animal wool and other substances which have a tendency after a time to develop certain unpleasant conditions. The dressing of the hair in this fashion being a lengthy and costly process, it followed that it was not indulged in oftener than possible, and it, therefore, frequently happened that a lady's head was not dressed or "opened" (this was the term used) more than once in two months, with a result that needs no description. This disgusting condition of affairs would, one imagines, have sufficed for an excuse if one had been necessary to condemn the head-dress, but it

The head-dress: agitation for its abolition.

1789

remained in vogue notwithstanding until 1785, when, in obedience to the dictates of fashion as personified by the ladies of the Court of the Tuileries, its abolition was decreed. 1786–1789. Fashion in Paris. The abolition of the head-dress.

The causes that brought about the ultimate disappearance of the most extravagant and unsightly method of dressing the hair ever devised by civilised beings have been variously explained, but that they emanated from France is undisputed. According to some writers, an instinctive premonition of the approaching cataclysm, when any one bearing the remotest resemblance to the hated aristocracy would be a marked person, prompted the abandonment of so distinctive a mode, whilst others state that the welcome disappearance of the odious fashion was brought about through the influence of the great painters of the day, who were also said to have been instrumental in sweeping away other follies of the times. It seems, however, far more probable that the passing away of the head-dress was but an instance of the fickleness of feminine fashion, actuated perhaps in no small degree by the serious political and social troubles which were threatening the country. The causes that brought it about.

The hair henceforth was once more restored to its native state, and, dressed without powder, was allowed to fall in curls on the shoulders; hats with immense brims came into favour, and contributed to impart a picturesque and natural effect which had been long missing. The era of the head-dress with all its attendant barbarisms was at an end, and it may be safely conjectured never to return, whatever the evolutions of fashion. As might have been expected, the hooped skirt did not long survive the head-dress in France, although curiously enough it long afterwards remained the Court dress in England. Hair restored to its natural state. Hats with immense brims. The disappearance of the head-dress. The disappearance of the hooped skirt.

Not one of the least significant signs of the time, and indicative of the position that woman was gradually usurping in the sphere of public life apart from fashion, were the

1786–1789. The Salons of Paris.

"Salons," which after the death of Louis XIV had gradually commenced to gain in importance. Started originally as political coteries, they eventually spread their influence through every phase of feminine fashion.

The Salon of Madame Necker.

The Salon of Madame Necker, the wife of Jacques Necker, the Irish-Genevan banker, and former Finance Minister, was one of the most famous, and here were to be found nearly all the celebrities of the time: Madame de Staël, la Duchesse de Lauzun, la Comtesse de Brienne, the talented and beautiful Madame de Genlis, authoress of "Zélie ou l'Ingénue," la Princesse de Monaco, M. de Chastellux, M. de la Harpe, M. de Saint-Lambert, l'Abbé Morellet, Lord Stormont, la Comtesse de Choiseuil, etc. Among such a brilliant assemblage conversation would be mainly on political events, as might have been expected from the position of M. Necker, but it was seldom restricted to the one topic, as Madame Necker believed in what she was pleased to call "general conversation," though she was scarcely more than a figurehead in her own house, where she only held a Salon by reason of her husband's position. It was written of her at the time, that she neither understood nor was accustomed to grandeur, was a dominating woman in her relations, and combined with this failing a lack of breeding, a cold, reasoning spirit which presided over a conversation rather than started one, and had much vanity and little pride. Hardly a flattering portrait, yet it was at her Salon that all that was most distinguished in the political and fashionable world assembled.

The Salon of Madame de Beauharnais.

Another Salon equally renowned, but where the guests felt more at their ease, was that of Madame de Beauharnais. Equality and Liberty presided there at all times. The authoress of the "Fausse Inconstance" and the "Amants d'Autrefois" had no tendency, like Madame de Staël, toward those virile glories which are always offensive in women.

To her talents were added every feminine charm. We are told in the quaint language of a French writer of the time that "Madame de Beauharnais had the delicacy and tact not only to receive, but to 'greet' as well. She knew how to listen, and appeared to listen even when she was not doing so. She had made in her life two or three witty remarks, and only repeated them occasionally. To these charms and affectionate comradeship were added a good table, and dinners on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Her Salon was an excellent auberge." It is not surprising after reading this eulogy that one learns that those who were anything in the Paris fashionable life in those years were to be found at Madame de Beauharnais' receptions. 1786–1789. The Salons of Paris.

Paris had yet another curious Salon where pleasure was a serious business, and where all the revolutionaries were admitted. An Englishman, the Duke of Bedford, gave balls which had all the éclat of the famous supper-parties of Grimod de la Reynière. The Revolution had not driven him from Paris, and it interested him to watch what was going on around him, for he was very keen on the subject of Jacobinism, and very inquisitive, somewhat like a spectator who runs no risk of having to pay for his treat. The Duke of Bedford invited all sorts of people to his fêtes, of which the Marquis de la Vilette was the ornament and the president. Society promised itself not to go to his house, but went all the same. Whether it was curiosity on the part of the women to see what dresses the Duchesse d'Arenberg or Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe would wear, or to hear the latest double entente of the Duke, or to gaze on the flowers or fruit, it is difficult to know, but it is certain that an invitation to one of these balls was the ambition and dream of both men and women of the fashionable world of that time. The Salon of the Duke of Bedford. The Marquis de la Vilette.

But perhaps one of the most important of the Salons

1786-1789. The Salon of Madame Roland.

of this time was that of the ill-starred Madame Roland, which, by reason of its having become the resort of such leaders of the popular movement as Robespierre, Danton, Brissot, and their satellites, exercised an influence which made it one of the most serious factors in Paris political life of these troublous times. Though not beautiful in the ordinary acceptance of the word, Madame Roland possessed a charm which, combined with a calm and learned reasoning and power of observation, brought her many admirers amongst the extreme party whose cause she had espoused. Her antipathy to the Monarchy expressed itself in her every act, as is evidenced by her not only aiding in the publication of the ultra-revolutionary journal, "The Republican," but also by the petty hatred and animosity she never missed an opportunity of displaying towards the hapless King and Queen. She was filled with ideas of a Republic for France which were almost Utopian in their aims, but which, as the result shows, were never destined to be realised. The name of Madame Roland is remembered amongst the many remarkable feminine characters of the time, more especially by reason of her extraordinary courage, and her untoward fate at the hands of those whom she had helped into power. That she exerted a strong influence over the destinies of France from the dawn of the Revolutionary movement cannot be doubted, and for that reason, if for no other, the fame of her Salon has passed into history.

Other famous Salons.

Apart from these historical Salons there were others equally famous at the time, as for instance those of Madame de Polignac, Madame de Genlis, and la Duchesse de Chartres, all of which were centres of individual coteries of which, however, it is impossible to give more than passing notice in a work of this description. This brief summary, however, will have conveyed some idea of the part taken by women of fashion in the period under review.

1790

1791

1792

CHAPTER II

EVENTS were shaping themselves rapidly. The Revolution and the Reign of Terror had obliterated every thing—Throne, Altar, traditions, morals, language, fashions, and customs. The uncompromising manifesto of the Revolutionary Tribunal, "La Liberté, la Fraternité ou LA MORT," blazed forth in letters of gold on slabs of black marble from every carrefour to remind all of the cataclysm from which France had just emerged.

1794. Fashion in Paris.

The manifesto of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

A social order of things of a character hitherto unknown in the civilised world came into existence, unbound by any rescripts of comity or ethics. The new interregnum brought about not only a complete subversion of everything hitherto existing, but also an absolute metamorphosis in the French feminine character. Surfeited by horrors, she emerged from the upheaval with her ideas so completely changed that one no longer recognised in the new creature the painted and powdered beings of the old régime. The reaction of the 9th Thermidor,* followed by the execution

New social order of things in France.

Metamorphosis of French feminine character.

The reaction of the 9th Thermidor.

* July 27, 1794. According to the Republican Calendar, which was established by the National Convention of November 24, 1793, the old system was abolished for civil purposes. It was considered to have finished on September 21, 1792, with the Monarchy. A new era was inaugurated which commenced with the establishment of the Republic on the autumnal equinox (September 22), 1792. It was divided into twelve months of thirty days each, plus five complementary days which were to be devoted to the celebration of Republican fêtes. The months received the following names, and started on the dates mentioned below:

Vendémiare	September 22.
Brumaire	October 22.

1794. Fashion in Paris. The reaction of the 9th Thermidor.

of Robespierre, released pent-up feelings, long restrained by constant terror.

Monsieur Georges Duval, who was an actual eye-witness of all he describes, in his "Souvenirs de la Réaction Thermidorienne," tells us that the reaction immediately after that fateful day of deliverance was sudden, impetuous, terrible. Scarcely had the scaffold been pulled down—the "Pit" * at the Barrière du Trône still displayed to the terrified passers-by its yawning gulf, from the bottom of which putrid miasma continued to exhale into the air and infect the neighbourhood; the ground around had not as yet completely absorbed all the human blood with which it had been drenched for over two months—than already balls were organised, and Paris gave herself over to rejoicing and festivity. Every one seemed feverishly anxious to make up for lost time by indulging in pleasures of all sorts.

The "Pit" at the Barrière du Trône.

Paris rejoicing after its deliverance.

Frimaire	November 21.
Nivôse	December 21.
Pluviôse	January 20.
Ventôse	February 19.
Germinal	March 21.
Floréal	April 20.
Prairial	May 20.
Messidor	June 19.
Thermidor	July 19.
Fructidor	August 18.

The motives for the establishment of this new régime were not only to correct the faults of the Gregorian Calendar, but still further to mark the new epoch into which France was entering, and to create a calendar of a purely national character, which, whilst not reflecting the ideas of any particular religion, would be suitable for all. This Republican Calendar did not, however, prove as satisfactory from the practical point of view as was anticipated, so it was officially suppressed after January 1, 1806. It had lasted twelve years, two months, and twenty-seven days.

* The executions during the last two months of the Terror took place at the Barrière du Trône. Immediately under the centre of the scaffold on which stood the guillotine, a large pit had been dug, and into this was drained the blood from the seventy or eighty daily victims. After the scaffold had been demolished, the pit remained open to the public gaze for some days before it was filled in.

1794. Fashion in Paris. Delirious times following the Deliverance.

Those delirious times immediately following upon the fateful day of the Deliverance have been most graphically described by Edmond and Jules de Goncourt in their "Histoire de la Société Française pendant le Directoire." What can be more impressive than the following word-picture?

Edmond and Jules de Goncourt's graphic description.

"Night falls: listen: all the city is full of noise, and, wearying the very echoes, an orchestra composed of innumerable orchestras proclaims the awakening and the sleeping of the city on both the right and left banks of its river. On all sides the violins sing, and from the most obscure cul-de-sac one hears the strident notes of shrill fiddles. The musicians pant for breath, and at every corner and every crossing the bands resound and mingle without harmonising in the uproar of their rivals. France is dancing.

"She dances since Thermidor, she dances as she sung before: she dances to revenge herself, she dances to forget: between her bloody past and her dark future she dances. Scarcely saved from the guillotine, so as to believe it no longer, and the leg outstretching, the ear to the tune, the hand on the shoulder of the first comer, France still bleeding, and quite ruined, hops and trips and capers about, in an immense and maddening saraband.

"It is the god Vestris that has succeeded the god Marat. 'Everywhere with your violins, dancing-masters! Light up blazing chandeliers, suns of the night! Contractors for orchestras, Helman of the Rue Gaillon, prepare always to have at hand cohorts of harmony, troops of indefatigable musicians full of energy till four in the morning!' In the nocturnal hours, the knockers resound on doors: 'Violin-players, wake up, here are six écus of six livres, and a bottle of wine for your night.' Happy is he who can play the fiddle, he lives by ruining the nouveau riche.

1794. Fashion in Paris. Dances everywhere after the 9th Thermidor.

"The multitude rushes to the balls. It lives for the present, shaking off memory, abandoning hope: it intoxicates itself with noise, lights, shimmering gauze, hot odours, exposed bosoms, suggestions of legs, glances, nakedness, and the voluptuousness of the senses. Terpsichore suffices to console them in their grief, all these Frenchmen, all these young Armagnacs, drenched with the blood of the scaffolds where their fathers perished.

"One dances in thin shoes: one dances in rough sabots: one dances to the snuffling of the bag-pipes: one dances to the suave notes of the flute: one dances 'en scandant la bourrée': one dances jumping about in the English fashion. And the rich and the poor, the workman and the master, good company and bad company, all do the best their legs will let them in this Bacchanalian epidemic which runs riot through six hundred and forty-four public balls."

To attempt to give even a short description of all the dances would occupy far too much space, but there were a few which must be mentioned, if only in order to give some faint idea of the general frenzy of rejoicing of the inhabitants of Paris after their delivery from the Reign of Terror. They were dancing everywhere from the highest to the lowest, in every house or open space where a ball could be started. They danced in the old Cemetery of Saint-Sulpice on the very gravestones, for there had been no time to remove them. They danced in tears, they danced in mourning; cheap dances, middle-class dances, aristocratic dances, dances from four sous a tune up to five francs by subscription only. For it was not confined only to the populace. The wealthy classes, or rather what was left of them in Paris at the time, also took part in them, and the scenes as described by actual eye-witnesses read like veritable descriptions of the infernal regions.

The different dances.

1794.

Fashion in Paris.

The balls of the Hôtel de Richelieu.

There were balls at the house of Richelieu, where they finished up with a cold supper, and where they danced under the magnificent panelled ceilings which were dishonoured on Sundays by the smoke of pipes and the aroma of hot grog, on those ancient parquet floors which were ruined by greasy boots, and on which the prostitutes of the Palais Royal tumbled and reeled.

Madame Hamelin at the balls at the Hôtel Longueville.

But where the best people danced, where the beautiful Madame Hamelin would most frequently exhibit her Creole charms in unblushing semi-nudity, was at the Hôtel Longueville. There, in those majestic salons, as vast in extent as a gallery in the Louvre, thirty sets of quadrilles could be danced at a time to the orchestra conducted by Hallin. Three hundred perfumed and ethereal women, in indecent "Venus déshabille," "showing all they ought not to show," as the de Goncourts put it quaintly, "dainty legs, roguish feet, elegant bodices, wandering hands, bosoms d'Armide, and forms of Callipyge," in the arms of vigorous dancers, twisting and whirling again and again, each clasped tightly to her Adonis, and giving themselves up unrestrainedly to all the delights and abandon of the hour.

Indecent déshabille.

Monsieur Mercier writing about the scenes at the different balls.

"Who would have thought," says Monsieur Sébastien Mercier, in "Paris pendant la Révolution," "on looking round these Salons resplendent with light, at these women with naked feet, with all their toes covered with diamonds, that one had only just been delivered from the Reign of Terror; that so many thousands of people had perished, leaving no traces even of their existence?" If any regrets were expressed at the disappearance of the old régime, they had at length become so conventional, and the aristocracy had fallen so low, that one no longer even troubled to carry those fans cleverly embroidered with fleurs-de-lis, nor those mysterious bonbonnières in which were hidden the prescribed colours of Royalty, whilst the infamous

1794. Fashion in Paris.

"bal de victimes" was after a short time only spoken of as a bizarre kind of amusement. No account of the almost inconceivable state of social life in Paris immediately after the fall of Robespierre would be complete without a slight description of these "bals à la victime" which had been started by the survivors of the aristocracy almost immediately after the day of the Deliverance. Here again I cannot do better than give Mercier's own words.

The "bals à la victime."

"Will it be believed by posterity," he asks, "that people whose parents had perished on the scaffold, instead of appointing days for public and solemn affliction, where, assembled together in dress of mourning, they would have shown their grief for losses so cruel and recent, actually fixed days for dancing and other festivities, waltzing, eating, and drinking in all jollity. To be admitted to the banquet or to dance, it was necessary to produce a certificate to prove that one had lost a father or mother, a wife or brother or sister under the knife of the guillotine. The death of mere relatives did not confer the right to be present on these festive occasions. Could it have been Holbein's Dance of Death that inspired such a hideous idea? Why did they not in the midst of the noise of violins make a headless spectre join in the dance? Vain efforts of the Aristocrats to form new conventions! But all that bears the stamp of fanaticism or wanton ceremony is doomed to disappear rapidly."

There were apparently several other gruesome conditions attaching to admission to these infamous entertainments. Duval, in his "Souvenirs Thermidoriens," describes at considerable length how male dancers had to salute on entering, by a movement of the head, imitating that of a victim as he was placed under the guillotine, whilst the fair sex wore thin red ribbon tied round their necks to recall the scission made by the knife.

Monsieur Duval's "Souvenirs Thermidoriens."

1794. Fashion in Paris.

The "bal à la victime": variance of the different writers as to its locale.

It is, however, curious to note that the several authors of the period who have described the bal are at variance upon its locale. The de Goncourts mention that it took place in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, the Duchesse d'Abrantés states that it was held in the Hôtel Richelieu in the Rue Louis le Grand, and afterwards at the Hôtel de Thelusson, Rue de Provence, whilst we have both Mercier and Duval protecting themselves by not mentioning at all where to their knowledge this gruesome exhibition of depravity took place. The substratum, however, of all their statements seems to be practically the same, with the exception perhaps of Her Grace of Abrantés, who naturally gives a feminine and therefore lighter touch to her description. In any case it must be admitted that the narratives of the chroniclers of these times cast a lurid and unsatisfactory light on the morale and character of the French aristocrat of the period. One must, however, take into consideration to a certain extent the exceptional conditions under which these young and unfortunate persons found themselves; their sudden transition from poverty to affluence, from extremes of human tension to momentary relief. When one contemplates all this, one is perhaps more moved to pity than indignation at these repellent proceedings.

Exceptional conditions in which the young aristocrats found themselves.

Let us see in our next chapter how feminine fashion was governed and regulated by the stirring events of this epoch.

CHAPTER III

1789. Fashion in Paris before the taking of the Bastille.

UNTIL the taking of the Bastille, Paris fashion had come from Versailles. Versailles was the acme of all elegance. It was fashion itself, and it was said

Mademoiselle Berthin.

that Mademoiselle Berthin used to go there overnight to find the ideas which Paris would adopt the following day.

1791. Fashion under the Revolution.

Under the Revolution, fashion became democratised and common property. Every one had the power in turn to wield its tyranny, and in the anarchy of taste over which Madame Tallien reigned without governing, individual initiative and coquetry succeeded the omnipotence of the example of the Court. Thus, only just set free, fashion

1794. Fashion reverts to the Greek and Roman period.

reverted to the Greek and Roman period, and, encouraged by the patriotic school, even went so far back as before Christ. Watteau and Lancret costumes and Pompadour

Disappearance of Louis XVI costumes.

robes disappeared; slippers, rouges, patch-boxes, all followed the fashion of the buried past. In vain did rouge endeavour to survive under the faint disguise of a vegetable liquid. The picture of "Psyche and Cupid" by Gerard exhibited

Paleness in vogue.

in the Salon in *l'an VI*, brought paleness into vogue, and nothing therefore remained of the old tradition. The extreme of this reaction was reached when ordinary white paint was used by fashionable beauties in order to make themselves look interesting with faces made up à la

Beauties à la Psyche.

Psyche.*

To describe fashion as being in a state of chaos at this

* "Souvenirs de Paris," par Kotzebue, vol. i.

1793

1794

1795

period is only to put it mildly. Fashions were made, lost, remade, and lost again within the space of a few days. It is therefore difficult to follow its vicissitudes, or to assign any definite dates for any particular caprice. Take hair-dressing for example. After the 9th Thermidor, we have the "coiffure à la victime," a souvenir of prison days and the gaoler rushing after the condemned person on his way to the guillotine to snatch his head-ribbon, and selling him a curved comb to replace it.

1794. Fashion in Paris.

Varieties of hair-dressing at the commencement of the Directoire.

Then almost day by day there were changes. At one moment Spanish nets for the chignon, next day no chignon at all: to-day curls over the ears, then curls on the top of the head, then at the back of the neck, then the hair fixed like a helmet, or arranged with ostrich or vulture feathers. Sometimes the chignon was loose and movable, at others it was imprisoned tightly in a purple silk net. Whilst Bonaparte in the midst of his victories was collecting cameos to adorn later the hair of Madame Bonaparte in Paris, head-dresses were made entirely of jewellery of various sorts—from gold chains and ropes of pearls to Oriental turbans of gold. Perruques came into fashion; for a time blonde, yellow, and even blue wigs were seen. Then suddenly it was remembered that under the Reign of Terror blonde perruques were forbidden, that in a speech before the Tribunal of the Commune, Payan had said: "A new sect has just been formed in Paris which is anxious to unite with the Centre Révolutionnaires, and a lot of thoughtless giddy women are eager to buy the blonde hair of young victims of the guillotine, and to wear thus on their own heads hair so costly." The mere recollection of this speech recalled the horrors of those times, apart from the suggestion of the origin of the wigs they were wearing, and was sufficient to sound the death-knell of the perruque.

Head-dresses.

Perruques in fashion.

The idea once started, that with the social change there

1794. Fashion in Paris. A drastic reformation in costume suggested.

should also be a drastic reformation in costume, the brothers de Goncourt tell us the inspiration came immediately, that it was in the Greek and Roman antiquities that suggestions for the projected revolution in the mode would be found. Where indeed could the new Republic seek for better models? Were there not, it was asked, paintings to give the characteristics of the Athenian and the Roman? whilst the artist David should advise as to what a virgin should wear.

The painter David, the revolutionary painter-apostate.

For it might be of interest here to mention that that revolutionary painter-apostate, "le broyeur de sang du comité de sûreté générale," had succeeded with great difficulty in getting himself released from the Luxembourg prison, where he had been incarcerated since the Thermidor reaction. Politics therefore had now no further attraction for a renegade of his type, so he had returned to his art. Paris was in too happy a condition of mind at this moment to wish to remember the past, so the infamous deeds of the talented painter were forgotten in the general rejoicings.

David and the new costume movement.

It has been said that David was the actual initiator of the new costume movement, but the justification for this statement is based upon the very slightest grounds, and the de Goncourts certainly give him no particular credit for it, not mentioning his name more than casually. The man himself, apart from the painter, was one of the most unpleasing products of the Revolutionary movement, and certainly nothing one has heard about him redounds to his credit. The Countess Brownlow in her reminiscences, describing a visit to his studio, says: "David himself was a sight, as well as his pictures, but not a pleasing one in any way. Unlike the smoothness and high finish and unmeaning faces which characterised his heroes, his face was remarkably coarse, and the expression of the countenance

Countess Brownlow's reminiscences of David.

decidedly bad, fully confirming one's belief in the accounts of his conduct during the worst days of the Revolution." 1794. Fashion in Paris.

To return, however, to the momentous question of the new costume; it now came to pass that two societies for whom the matter of costume was a personal one, the "Société républicaine des Arts" and "le Club révolutionnaire des Arts," held meetings for the sole purpose of threshing out the momentous proposition. The whole idea resolved itself into points of consideration, declared the famous sculptor, Espercienne, who was the principal orator on one occasion. "Shall the Greek or the Roman costume be adopted?" "The Greek costume," was the unanimous reply of the audience. "If so, then," asked the orator, "shall the mantle or the chlamys be worn with it?" The question remained unanswered decisively, but it had taken root, and was discussed vigorously. "Société républicaine des Arts." "Le Club révolutionnaire des Arts." The sculptor Espercienne.

Meanwhile the news of the debate got abroad, and shortly after a matronly married person, who said she wished to dress herself in the antique style, applied to the "Société des Arts" for instruction how to cut out the pattern. Two experts, Espercienne and Petit Coupray, were appointed to help her, in spite of much railing on the part of Garneray, the painter, against the inconsistency of the female mind. It therefore came about that a dress cut according to the antique pattern, for the mother of a family (mère de famille), under the guidance of two sculptors started the new era in feminine fashion, and incidentally the most attractive of any of the modes the world has seen. Debate on reformation of costume. Espercienne and Petit Coupray appointed to supervise making of a dress. The new era in feminine fashion.

In a very short time the new vogue had caught on so rapidly, that every couturière of Paris was making nothing but classical dresses. There were robes à la Flore, robes à la Diane, tunics à la Ceres, tunics à la Minerva, coats The new vogue catches on.

1794. Fashion in Paris.

à la Galatée, robes au lever de l'Aurore, robes à la Vestale ; different dressmakers made specialities of different styles.

Greek robes.

Nancy was noted for her Greek robes,

Roman dresses.

Madame Raimbaut was without rival in turning out Roman dresses ; and then, when the dress was completed, and the languorous élégante for whom it was made was satisfied with it, it was the turn

Coppé, the noted shoemaker.

of Coppé, the noted shoemaker, who drove up in his blue-painted gig, and brought various pairs of slippers in all varieties of material and colour, of lightest possible make,

The cothurn.

for the goddess to choose from. The cothurn (buskin) was the rage ; it fastened with a tassel, in the middle of the leg, and for twenty écus it was said that Coppé made them of a colour, a freshness, an elegance, a poetry, that would not have been unworthy of the foot of a heroine of Retif, or that of Madame Staël herself.

Anecdote about a lady's shoes and Coppé.

There was a rather amusing anecdote related at the time of Coppé. A fair customer sent for him to ask him to give some reason for her new pair of cothurns coming to pieces the first time of wearing. The maestro, after having carefully and studiously examined the damaged foot-gear, nodded his head gravely as though vainly seeking an inspiration, then suddenly, after a long pause, tapped his forehead as though illuminated with a brilliant idea, and exclaimed : " Ah ! parbleu ! of course I know the reason : I would bet fifty louis that Madame has been walking in them."

The new " culte." Gradually the nude develops.

This revival of Arcadia appealed so strongly to the new " culte," that they gradually began to aim at adopting the nude itself. Dresses were gradually withdrawn from the bosom, and the arms, which had been hitherto discreetly covered, were entirely denuded as far as the shoulder : then the legs and the feet followed suit. It was humorously remarked that women increased in value

Transparency of costumes.

at the time as through the scarcely veiled transparency

one could plainly see that their thighs and legs were encircled with diamond-studded bands. Soon even silk and wool did not meet with the approval of the belles; they found that they formed hard and ungainly folds which disguised rather than revealed the form, so the demand was only for soft material. Starch was entirely forbidden. A little more, and it is extremely probable that women would have consented to wear wet draperies, such as the ancient sculptors used on their models. They refused to wear anything but muslin or lawn, all that outlined and modelled the contour of the body being in great demand. In this vision of muslin, lawn, and gauze, amongst all these ethereal beings light as a cloud of tissue, Madame Recamier was conspicuous, always draped in white. "It was the hour," says Kotzebue, "when the good sense of decency warbled softly to those wives and mothers whose virtue found itself sufficiently sheltered behind an ell of cotton:

1794. Fashion in Paris.

Soft materials only in request.

Only muslin and lawn worn.

Madame Recamier.

"'Grace à la mode
Une chemise suffit,
Une chemise suffit,
Ah que c'est commode!
Une chemise suffit,
C'est tout profit.'"

"It was a moment," he continues, "when a journalist could thus sum up the feminine wardrobe: 'A Parisienne must have three hundred and sixty-five head-dresses, as many pairs of shoes, six hundred dresses, and twelve chemises.'" One fine day the latter article was suppressed. The Salons of Paris learned that it had been decided the previous evening that the chemise was no longer in fashion: the chemise spoilt the look of the figure, was awkward to arrange, and the stiff and ugly folds of this antique garment made a well-shaped tunic lose all its graceful lines. "For more than two thousand years women

A famous wardrobe of the period.

The chemise is discarded.

1794. Fashion in Paris.

have been wearing chemises, and it is time that such archaism disappeared."

Panard relates how, at the last conclave in Olympus, Venus was opposed to any woven garment, adding:

"Les attraits qu'en tous lieux
Sans voile aujourd'hui l'on admire,
A force de parler aux yeux,
Au cœur ne laisseront rien à dire."

The new costume.

Henceforth all the repertories of ancient times, the classical as well as the barbarous ages of men, all the countries and climes of the earth were ransacked to give variety and attraction to women's attire. Under the

The "Merveilleuses."

jocular cognomen of "Merveilleuses" a contingent of fashionable women initiated a new era in costume which was destined by reason of its utter audacity to become historic. In this pursuit they were restrained by no con-

All decency at an end.

sideration of decorum, nor abashed by any admonition of delicacy or modesty: whatever was necessary for the display of the special character of ancient history which the Merveilleuse assumed for the day, the metamorphosis was complete. A material was sought after that would reproduce the statuesque effect of clinging drapery, and in the latitude they thus permitted themselves it may easily be perceived that decency was being constantly

The chemise is replaced by a tricot.

outraged. The chemise was replaced by a flesh-coloured silk tricot which, as was said at the time, no longer let one guess, but actually see, all the secret charms of a woman. This is what they called being dressed "à la sauvage." Even stockings and shoes were abandoned in favour of

Sandals worn at balls. Diamonds on toes.

sandals, at balls, whilst, to emphasise still further this caprice, many wore diamonds on their toes. The journalists, in direct opposition to the stern injunctions of the Directoire, who for a moment had endeavoured to repress these excesses, described in terms of the most voluptuous

eloquence the luxury that reigned in fashionable circles of the Metropolis, and, under the guise of affected censure and the pretence of being scandalised at the manners of the moment, they gave daily descriptions of the elegance, the levity, and the licence which the "Merveilleuses" gave to fashion.

1794. Fashion in Paris. Journalists describe the modes.

Here is a description from a French journal of the time of the scene at a concert at the théâtre, Rue Feydeau: "It is not till towards the middle of the concert that the reserved boxes are filled: then the coup d'œil becomes singular. You see suspended out of the boxes thousands of arms uncovered, not merely to the elbow, but to the shoulder-blade, and these arms are ornamented with diamonds, pearls, and gold trinkets. You see plumes, diamonds, and head-dresses so rich that one of these would maintain a hundred creditors of the State for a twelvemonth. It is not enough to make us admire the arm—we must judge of all their other attractions. They stand up in front of the boxes, they display their collars of pearls, chains, zones, diamond ornaments, the richness of which surpasses anything the imagination can form. You can mark every lineament of their form and you see that linen is absolutely proscribed. How is it possible to resist this enchanting spectacle? The finest morsel of the concert is neglected, except when Garat sings (because he is in fashion); the men are all debating to whom to give the apple as the meed of beauty. Last night the suffrages were divided between Mademoiselle Longe and Madame Tallien: the first with a tight sleeve that covered her arm, and a modest though too much painted face concealed under a large hat of rose-colour; the other recalling the antiquity of the Republic founded by Brutus. She was dressed like a Roman lady, but not unlike one of those matrons whose principal attire was their native modesty."

A concert at the Théâtre, Rue Feydeau: curious scene.

Scanty attire of the women.

Mademoiselle Longe.

Madame Tallien.

1794. Fashion in Paris. Madame de Beauharnais. Madame Recamier

The widow of the Marquis de Beauharnais, the future Empress Josephine, who was at that time only the Citoyenne Bonaparte, divided the honours of the throne of fashion and beauty amongst the "Merveilleuses" with the graceful Madame Recamier and Madame Tallien, though there were many scions of the old aristocracy to be found amongst the leaders of the new vogue, as, for instance, Mesdames de Noailles, de Croisseul, de Morlaix, de Barre, de Beaumont, de Saint-Hilaire, to cite only a few whose names the newspapers were constantly mentioning. The dissolute and voluptuous Barras went so far as to extend the hospitality of the Luxembourg to this bevy of beauty, which at once gave the fashion a sort of chartered licence.

Barras and the Luxembourg.

Madame Recamier.

Although one includes the name of Madame Recamier amongst those who have always been associated with the "Merveilleuses," she is scarcely to be classed as being merely one of the leaders of fashion and beauty, for she had talent and force of character which placed her high above her surroundings, and her name will be still remembered when those of so many others of the time have been long forgotten.

The Salon of Madame Recamier.

"It is impossible," says the Duchesse d'Abrantés in her "Histoire des Salons de Paris," "unless one had seen and retained an affectionate souvenir of her, to form an idea of her Hebe-like bloom, and all the attractions of her smile. There was in the unison of her smile and her eyes more charm than was necessary to captivate the most hardened heart. Madame Recamier at the age of eighteen was a unique creation, and I have never found either in Italy or Spain, that country so rich in beauty, nor in Germany, that classic land of rose-leaf complexions, anything that could be compared with Madame Recamier."

This eulogy does not appear excessive when one remembers that the object of it was considered at that time

not only one of the most beautiful women in Europe, as is proved by David's well-known masterpiece, but also one of the most remarkable characters of her time. At the early age of twenty, her superb mansion in the Rue du Mont Blanc was the most sought after by every one of the time who was any one. Few women have had a life so eventful, so filled with conspicuous incidents, and so brilliant in its successes, as Madame Recamier. 1794. Madame Recamier.

She was the daughter of a notary named Jean Bernard, and from her youth gave signs of great promise, for at quite an early age she was an excellent musician on the harp and piano, and a graceful dancer. The growing beauty was already being talked about when she attracted the notice of Marie Antoinette in 1784, who sent for the girl, to compare her with her own daughter, who was then considered very beautiful. The Salon of her mother, Madame Bernard, was at the time the rendezvous of the principal political men and *beaux-esprits* of the time, and it was here that her daughter, who was then only sixteen years of age, met her husband, a rich Parisian banker, Jacques Rose Recamier, twenty-six years older than herself, and with nothing much to recommend him except his wealth. The marriage turned out a failure, but the young wife was clever enough not to wear her heart on her sleeve, so to the world they were outwardly devoted. She was ambitious, and the wealth of her husband helped to carry out her projects. Her great aspiration was to be surrounded in her Salon by a circle of friends amongst whom should be all that was most distinguished in the Paris world, and in this, as is well known, she was successful beyond her wildest dreams. There are probably but few Salons which achieved such distinction as that of Madame Recamier in 1800, the magnificence of the surroundings forming a splendid framing for the exquisite beauty of the hostess. It was

1794. not until the commencement of the Consulate that her real career as a political and social hostess started, although her beauty had already created a sensation during the Directoire,

Madame Recamier. and had attracted hosts of admirers, amongst whom was no less a personage than Lucien Bonaparte, the brother of the future Emperor.

The following, written about her at the time, will convey some idea of the unique position this beautiful woman occupied in the public estimation: "No one will be surprised to see amongst our illustrious contemporaries the friend of Madame de Staël, of Monsieur de Chateaubriand, of Monsieur Ballanche, this lady who by the power of her beauty, the grace of her disposition, the infinite charm of her conversation, attracted constantly round her the most eminent men of all parties, and who never inspired love without respect, nor friendship without passion."

It is well known that Monsieur Recamier had bought the splendid Hôtel in the Rue du Mont Blanc for her as a surprise gift, and Berlaut the architect had been engaged to transform the place into an enchanted palace. Berlaut had not only taste, but exquisite taste, and had never been unsuccessful in arranging a house. That of Madame Recamier was one of his most successful efforts: the dining-room, the bedroom, the small drawing-room, and the grand salon were all magnificently and elegantly furnished. It was here that the first ball to be given in a private house took place, the balls given by ministers and foreigners not being in the category. The balls that Madame Recamier gave were the most brilliant that had hitherto been seen in Paris, and she did the honours with such perfect grace and modesty as to gain all hearts. Madame Recamier was the first to hold receptions. She of course received a great many people by reason of her husband's position, but, apart from this, she had her own world, a world that was

more in unison with her own perfect taste and love of genial friendship, with the result that she established a definite coterie of her own, and in spite of her youth she achieved the honour of being considered a prototype for all other women. 1794. Madame Recamier.

Amongst the host of distinguished personages who were the *intimes* of her delightful Salon at the zenith of her success, one finds quite a cosmopolitan réunion. First and foremost, her bosom friend Madame de Staël, then one notes Lord and Lady Holland, Madame Dwoff and her husband, the Duchess of Gordon and Lady Georgina, Mr. Fox, Eugénie Beauharnais, the beautiful Duchesse de Courlande, Lord and Lady Yarmouth, Monsieur de Chateaubriand, Adrien and Mathieu de Montmorency, Madame Ouidner, and a host of others equally noted, which space, however, prevents one mentioning. These are, no doubt, sufficient to give an idea of the entourage her personal charm, kindliness, and remarkable beauty had attracted, and made her Salon one of the most famous of the time. Distinguished personages at her Salon.

The Countess Brownlow tells us in her Reminiscences: "The peace of 1802 brought, I suppose, many French to England, but I only remember one, the celebrated Madame Recamier, who created a sensation, partly by her beauty, but still more by her dress, which was vastly unlike the unsophisticated style and poke-bonnets of the Englishwomen. She appeared in Kensington Gardens à l'antique, a muslin gown clinging to her form like the folds of the drapery on a statue; her hair in a plait at the back, falling in small ringlets round her face, and glossy with 'l'huile antique'; a large veil thrown over the head completed her attire, that habitually caused her to be followed and stared at." 1802. Countess Brownlow's reminiscences of Madame Recamier.

Her visit to London still further emphasises the extraordinary charm of her personality; she was the talk Madame Recamier in London.

1802. of the town, and was received by the Prince of Wales, the Duchess of Devonshire, the Duke of Hamilton, and many others. It is related that people who did not know who she was would crowd round her when she appeared in public, so remarkable was her beauty.

1796

1797

1798

1799

1799

1800

CHAPTER IV

1796–1800. Fashion in Paris. Semi-nude women in the Champs Élysées.

THERE is audacity even in the audacity of the nude: one summer evening in the year 1796 two women, almost in a state of nudity, made their appearance in the Champs Élysées, one wearing simply some gauze tastefully draped, while the other had her breasts entirely uncovered. At the sight of such gross indecency, hooting was heard on all sides, and the two "Grecian" ladies in their statuesque garb were conducted to their carriage amidst the taunts and apostrophes of the crowd which had surrounded them. The fashionable women resigned themselves to the inevitable after this, and henceforth allowed their forms to be slightly more hidden. The papers announced that Madame Hamelin had decided to take to wearing chemises again. The fashion of "no chemises" had lasted exactly a week, and women had so well fashioned themselves to the costume of the antique in their war to the knife on all superfluous drapery, that they carried their fans in their waistbands, and their purses in their bosoms. Everything except the absolutely necessary was therefore discarded until, as the result of a brilliant idea, in place of pockets handsomely embroidered, reticules to be carried in the hand were introduced.

Madame Hamelin decides to wear lingerie again.

Curious makeshifts for pockets.

In connection with this it was amusingly recounted that one of the élégantes, inconvenienced by the new fashion of carrying a satchel with her handkerchief, smelling-bottle, purse, etc., on one occasion went to a reception attended by a page to carry the bag, and hand the articles

1796–1800. Fashion in Paris.

as they might be wanted. So well was the page qualified for the delicate post, being good-looking, well-made, active, and just one-and-twenty, that it was said the innovation would be extremely successful, and pages would probably take the place of lady's-maids.

Continual changing of fashions.

For women of fashion, in those unsettled times, in those days of governmental vacillation, it was a period of feverish unrest, in which modes changed and unchanged almost every day. What was a success in the evening might be a failure the following morning. It was a succession of bewildering adoptions and abandonments, revivals, novelties, sensations, transfigurations. It was fashion so Protean, so diverse, and so varied from day to day that the slightest wave of its magic wand was sufficient to make a vogue appear new and up to date in the Faubourg Saint-Germain when it had already become démodée on the Boulevards. Flat solid shoes replaced shoes with heels; colours changed in equally rapid succession: green, proscribed under the Reign of Terror, on account of the green hat of Charlotte Corday, came into fashion for a time; then followed a peculiar shade of violet, called "mouche," after which there was a delicate tint called "fifi pale effarouché," a name I find impossible to translate into English; then all three were outdone by jonquil, which was adopted at the same time by Madame Tallien and the Jacobin posters, which therefore made it a partisan colour. The waists of the dresses were one day cut heart-shaped, the following day in the shape of butterflies' wings. For a short time dresses, fichus, sacs, were all "quadrillé," then skirts, sleeves, backs, bodices, were all laced.

Rapid changes in the modes.

At this period two novelties, or rather revivals, made their reappearance in the "impoverished" toilettes of the fair sex—straw, in the shape of hats, night-caps, bonnets, ribbons, plumes, waistbands, tassels, and even fans; and

yellow velvet, which became the rage through a rather amusing incident, which is worth relating. Mademoiselle Mars, the famous actress, was performing an engagement at Lyons, when one morning a manufacturer of that noted city of rich stuffs asked for an interview. On entering, he proceeded to spread out before the astonished actress a lengthened fold of costly yellow velvet.

1796–1800. Fashion in Paris. Mademoiselle Mars and the ingenious speculator.

"Will you please accept this, and make my fortune?" said the gentleman.

Explanations over, it was soon understood that it was to be a business affair altogether: the shrewd tradesman knowing well that the superb woman before him set the fashion as to cut and material of dress for all Paris. Yellow velvet was what he knew best how to make, and nobody wore it! It was obsolete—the colour trying; but the entreaties of the eloquent pleader of his own cause overcame the kind heart of the actress. The velvet was handed over to her dressmaker, and made up for the tragedy which she was to play with Talma the week after. However, on seeing herself in the full-length mirror of the green-room, before the drawing up of the curtain, the heart of the actress gave way. "I look really ridiculous!" she exclaimed, "just like a huge canary, and I cannot appear. Call the manager, and postpone the performance." On receiving this sudden intelligence Talma rushed from his dressing-room. "Is that all?" he exclaimed as he surveyed the magnificent woman. "Why, you never looked so superb in your life! Chance has favoured you. The toilette is a miracle of effective beauty!" The play went on.

Yellow velvet the rage.

Ten days afterwards the Salons of Paris were perfectly golden with yellow velvet. Every woman of fashion must appear in that, and no other colour; and this was the reason for the grand fête given by the wealthiest manufacturer to

The Salons of Paris golden with yellow velvet.

1796–1800. Fashion in Paris.

Mademoiselle Mars on her return, years after, to play again at Lyons. It was at a superb country house on the banks of the Saône, and he had purchased it with the fortune made out of yellow velvet.

Spangles in fashion again.

Spangles which had been banished a year previously now suddenly reappeared in this vortex of changes, and became the rage. They were applied to almost every article.

"Paillette aux bonnets,
Aux toquets,
Aux petits corsets;
Aux fins bandeaux,
Au grand chapeau,
Paillette.
Au noir colliers,
Aux blancs souliers,
Paillette.
Paillette aux rubans,
Aux turbans,
On ne vois rien sans
Paillette."

Madame Hamelin and Madame Tallien.

In all these vagaries of capricious fashion, there was only one woman who rivalled the beautiful Madame Hamelin in following its impetuous course, and who, it is stated, was never a moment late in adopting the cut of a robe or the style of a head-dress. This was Madame

An expensive muslin gown.

Tallien, who was the first to spend forty livres on a simple muslin gown to wear at a reception at the Hôtel d'Alligre, Rue d'Orléans-Honoré. She it was also who first appeared at a ball at the Opera with rings on her toes, whilst at the

Blonde wigs, black wigs.

Salon of 1796; at the height of the fashion for blonde wigs, she only had to make her appearance wearing a black one, for the fashion to change immediately.

As a further instance of the intense rivalry between these two queens of Parisian fashion, we learn that on another occasion, when Madame Hamelin, during the agitation against clothing the figure, was the first to adopt the new

mode, and to appear as an undraped statue, Madame Tallien burst into sight one evening garbed only in a transparent veiling, with her throat and breasts encircled with a rivière of diamonds, which scintillated with a thousand flames at every movement of her exquisite body. Such a vision of loveliness was sufficient to eclipse any further rivalry for the time.

1796–1800. Fashion in Paris. Madame Tallien creates a sensation.

By reason of the depreciation in the value of the paper money which had been issued under the name of "assignats," * the most fantastic prices were paid by women in 1795 for fashionable articles of dress, as, for instance, 64 livres for making two bonnets; gauze for these bonnets, 100 livres; 3,400 livres for two dozen cambric handkerchiefs; 1,640 livres for a brown taffeta dress; 2,500 for a dress of batiste trimmed with silk. A year later 7,000 livres was paid for a tarlatan-trimmed mantle; making a hat, 600; a dress and a fan, 20,000; taffetas for a mantle, 3,000. These extraordinary prices continued to rise in proportion to the depreciation in value of the "assignats."

"Assignats" and their depreciation.

Fancy prices paid for women's dress.

In their outdoor costumes the "Merveilleuses" displayed an utter disregard for the inclemency of the seasons, going

Outdoor costumes of the "Merveilleuses."

* The finances of France were in so critical a condition in 1789, that a decree of December 21 of that year ordered the creation of four hundred millions of notes to bearer, carrying 5 per cent. interest, and called "assignats." The first series was in notes of a thousand and five hundred livres apiece. In 1791 a fresh series of twelve hundred millions was issued in five-franc notes. But forgery and other various causes combined with the Reign of Terror to bring about their fall in value to an almost incredible extent. One can form some idea of the terrible fluctuations in the prices of every commodity by the rapidity in the depreciation of the assignats. They were at par towards the end of 1793, that is to say, the louis in gold was worth twenty-five livres. The depreciation commenced early in 1794, and never stopped afterwards. In 1795 the louis in gold was worth 1,020 livres paper money; going down almost inconceivably in value the louis in gold was eventually worth in paper money as much as 8,600 livres. They were exchanged in April 1796 for territorial mandats in the proportion of thirty to one. They were finally annulled on May 21, 1797.

1796–1800. Fashion in Paris.

about on all occasions clad in less than what would be now considered light even for a bathing-costume, showing thus an indifference which stood in marked contrast to their menfolk, who in cold weather swaddled themselves in waistcoat upon waistcoat, numerous ties, and heavy hats pulled down over their foreheads. The "Merveilleuses," on the contrary, were content in the winter to cover their scarcely veiled nudity with a velvet cape or cloak lined with fur or swansdown, while in summer a flimsy scarf by way of a wrap was considered all-sufficient.

Open-air fêtes.

Open-air fêtes and race-meetings were inaugurated around and in Paris, and many of them became celebrated. The Fête Champêtre in the Tivoli Gardens, the Champs Élysées, and the Palais Égalité, were for their utter licentiousness the talk of Europe: so much so in fact, that a London paper of the time hinted that the reports of the fascinating delights and the unbridled gaiety at them were only a *ruse de guerre*, for no expedient could have been invented in the then state of European politics better calculated to engender a universal desire for the return of peace, and so giving every one, even the emigrant-aristocrats, a chance of going over to Paris and seeing and judging for themselves.

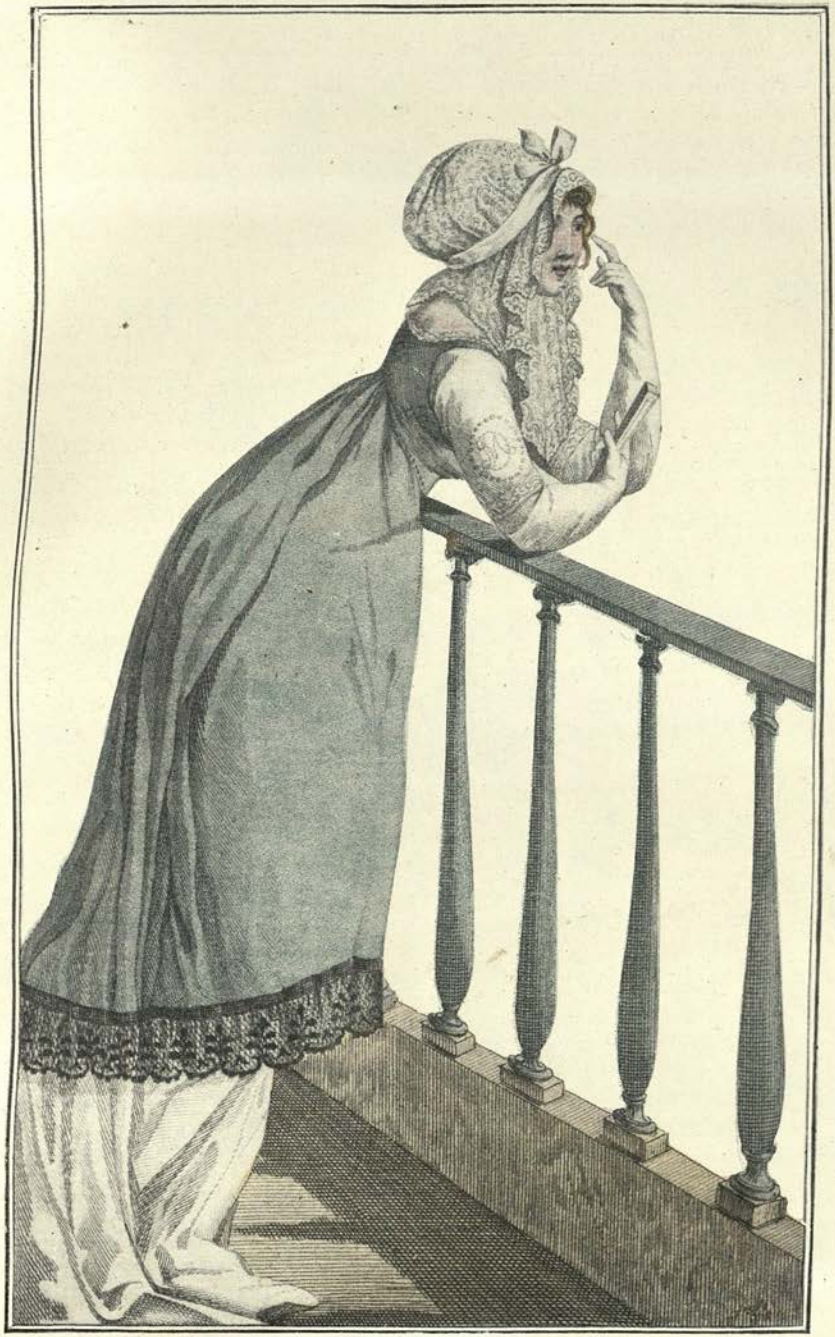
Unbridled gaiety.

It must not be said that French fashion, however much it may have broken with the traditions of the eighteenth century in taking up with the Greek costume, had become exclusive or refused to receive suggestions. It continued, so the chronicles tell us, to take ideas on all sides: the tippet from Germany, the flounce from the fifteenth century, the dress coat from Warsaw. It authorised its votaries to submit to the influences of all people. Like Rome, it appropriated from the vanquished all it considered worth the taking. Therefore, in putting Spain, Italy, Turkey, and England under contribution, it made France

Ideas taken from all nations.

Guirlandes de Pin. Tunique Grecque

1801



Demi fichu servant de Coeffure. Tunique a l'Anglaise.

1803

Coeffure de Grande Parure.

Coeffure de Grande Parure, en Réseau. Robe de Velours.

1806

1807

the costume market of the whole world; but Anglo-mania was in full bloom: all that was not English was proclaimed by the "Merveilleuses" to be "shockingly bourgeoise, and ungainly enough to give one hysterics," and everything that came from the country with which the Republic was at war, was fêted and applauded. Thus "Prusso-mania" reigned in France during the Seven Years' War, and the Parisiennes avenged themselves for Rosbach by wearing hats "à la Frédéric." Turbans, shawls, hats, "spencers," were "delightful clothing," and only appreciated by Revolutionary elegance if they had come across the Channel.

1796–1800. Fashion in Paris. France the costume market of the whole world. Anglo-mania in Paris.

"Prusso-mania" and "Anglo-mania."

"What a miracle!" exclaim the de Goncourts, "that this John Bull who usually orders the dresses for Madame Albion on the Continent has suddenly become the designer and costumier for French fashionable beauties. A miracle indeed, if we did not know that London is the new home of the work-girls of Mademoiselle Berthin, and of some emigrants, become through necessity dressmakers, and inculcating in others the taste that in happier times they displayed on their own persons." Anglo-mania was, however, but a sort of diversion rather than an innovation, and soon died out.

"John Bull" the costumier for French fashionable beauties.

The "Merveilleuses" disappeared with the Directoire, but not entirely the mode they had inaugurated, for it still survives, though in a modified form. Although reprehensible perhaps from the point of view of the immoral influence it exercised on the masses, the fashion was not void of considerable artistic merit, and as such was a welcome change from the hideous styles of the years preceding the Revolution.

The disappearance of the "Merveilleuses."

CHAPTER V

1808–1815. Fashion in London. Insular prejudice.

WHILST fashion was thus running riot in France, England was following the new course of things, but somewhat more soberly. Insular prejudice was very strong in those days, and it took a long while to introduce anything foreign from across the Channel. For some time severe polemics on the subject continued between the progressive section and that which was against any upsetting of the old-fashioned English ideas of decorum.

Pitt's powder tax.

Pitt's powder tax of 1795 did much to help abolish head-dressing, and to bring in the rational method which is so peculiarly suitable to the English type. That seemingly irritating imposition had been at the time vehemently opposed by the selfsame prejudiced votaries of old and obsolete ideas. Small wonder, therefore, that the mere rumour of the introduction of a fashion which was creating such a furore on the other side of the Channel should inspire the liveliest feelings of indignation amongst old-fashioned English folk who had been born and bred with the idea that everything French or coming from France spelt iniquity. With people of such narrow-minded views, there could be no question of admitting the possibility that any innovation from France could be by any chance acceptable, either from a moral or artistic standpoint. This curiously insular characteristic of the nation has been shown to be ingrained in the English temperament, and although in these ultra-modern days the tendency has be-

The new fashion rouses indignation amongst old-fashioned people.

The Court Dress as worn on his Majestys Birth Day.

Engraven for La Belle Assemblee N.o 32 Published by J. Bell Strand July 1 1808

1808

1808–1815. Fashion in London.

come considerably modified, it has taken several generations, aided by increasing international comity, and the improvement in the conditions of travel, to accomplish it.

The new style appears in London.

However, to return to our subject. The new style at length made its appearance in London, and its advent, which had long been heralded by travellers from the gay city, was hailed with a storm of derision and satire by the journalistic scribes of this country. This, of course, was only what might have been expected, but the innovation had come to stay, in spite of the opposition of the prudes, and the antagonism of the press generally. The most serious efforts of the writers of the period are quite amusing to read in our days, when one can regard the much discussed mode complacently from its artistic and historical aspect only. The following inspiration of an unknown bard is worth reproducing, if only as a specimen of journalistic rhyme in those days :

A storm of derision.

"'Enough of petticoats! Their reign is o'er.
Our feet unfettered feel their weight no more—
Nought now our free'st movements stops or stays.'
So boasts the nymph of these enlightened days.
Not long ago our dames, averse to freeze,
Did wear their petticoats below their knees;
But now, not made of such too tender stuff,
They scorn all warmth, a fig-leaf is enough—
Bosoms and necks and arms have long been bare,
And backs, good heavens! how broad! have made you stare.
Yet though the world above was given to show,
Still there survived some decency below.
Oh Boreas! iron tyrant of the North!
Call all thy keen artillery instant forth.
To thee our hopes make now their last appeal,
And if nought else can, thou shalt make them feel.
Drive on the Polar ice, increase thy snows,
Bring back our women's senses and their clothes.
But gravely—whence this madness? All agree
We do not love the more, the more we see.
Women, 'tis Nature's law, we must admire;
Too great exposure only cools our fire.
Howe'er old poets paint the Loves and Graces,
Our eyes demand no sample but their faces."

The new mode does not meet with approval.

1808–1815. Fashion in London. The short waist is adopted.

The short waist, when it was at last generally adopted, was a modification of the French style, though it must be added that in certain particulars it was an improvement on it. The English couturières had contrived to obliterate much of the originality of the French touch, and had given it an almost English personality, which has been immortalised by the great painters of the school of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Still the new mode did not meet with universal appreciation for some time, for England was very puritanical in those days, and the scantiness of the draperies was calculated to shock the old-fashioned folk, who were perhaps the more prejudiced through their hereditary detestation of everything French.

The new mode disapproved of for some time.

The prevailing sentiment described by a journalist.

In a contemporary magazine article on the dress of the period, a writer gives an idea of the prevailing sentiment. "It is impossible," he says, "to advert to the state of female manners without noticing a still more melancholy proof of the decay of those feelings which are the grand bulwark of female virtue, than even a growing indifference to the character of those who are admitted into the parties of fashionable life." He then somewhat unnecessarily adds that he refers, of course, to the indecent modes of dress which are becoming more and more prevalent among women of all classes. These modes, and indeed the whole style of fashionable female dress at that time, he denounces, "as evidently invented by the most profligate of the sex for the purpose of exciting sensuality and inflaming passion that stand in the greatest need of restraint. They have been adopted by women who lay claim to unsullied reputations, and by them are transmitted to the lowest ranks of female society."

Strait-laced public opinion.

This reads in our days as very acrimonious comment, but it reflected the narrow-minded and strait-laced public opinion of the time, and a totally unfounded apprehension

A Lady in the Parade Dress in Hyde Park.
Feb.y 1808.

1809

1808-1815. Fashion in London.

that what was taking place in Paris would be repeated in London, without taking into account the difference of temperament of the two nations. Under no conceivable social conditions could Englishwomen let themselves go, so to speak, to the extent the French did during the Directoire, and a comparison of the modes of the time sufficiently corroborates this. One notes that whilst the suggestion of ancient Greece is still retained, it is in so modified a form as to harmonise with Anglo-Saxon characteristics, the result being often very beautiful in its simplicity. The masterpieces of the great English portrait-painters of that epoch, Raeburn and Lawrence, are assuredly very more convincing in this respect. There is in them none of the suggestiveness one remarks in contemporary French painters of the new fashion. And this is somewhat the more surprising when we remember that the famous French Court dressmaker and milliner, Mademoiselle Berthin, had taken up her abode in London during the Revolution, and had brought all her Paris work-girls with her; so it is highly probable that all the most fashionable women of England must have profited by her new establishment.

Comparison of the French and English modes.

Mademoiselle Berthin in London.

Fashion in Paris. The advent of the Consulate.

After the Directoire was abolished, and with the advent of the Consulate, a curb was put upon the licentious state of affairs in the world of fashion which had existed in Paris for five years. The dress of the fair sex now became slightly more decorous. Long trains were still seen, and a somewhat subdued classic drapery, but with handsome embroidery, whilst Indian and Cashmere shawls gradually replaced the pélisses and spencers; muslin handkerchiefs or ruffs were worn round the neck in evening dress. The hair was drawn in tight and very becomingly to the head by a fillet of velvet or gold brocade, and often surmounted by white feathers—in fact the style of arranging the hair has never been more attractive than at this period.

Dress of women now slightly more decorous. The new costume.

Hair-dressing.

1808–1815. Fashion in London. Millinery turbans.

Turbans were the favourite headgear at this time, and it is here of interest to note how the different temperaments of the French and English women displayed themselves at this period. In France the victories of Napoleon's armies aroused but slight response in Paris, whilst in England, whether from national pride or patriotism, the prowess of the army or navy excited the utmost enthusiasm, and this was shown in a variety of forms, not the least interesting from the standpoint of feminine fashion being the manner in which the names of great commanders would be inscribed in large letters across the front of the all-fashionable turban. Amongst other millinery in vogue, bonnets, hats, and various other arrangements were to be seen in a variety of shapes.

Patriotism shown in hats in London.

Frequent changes in fashions in Paris.

Fashions in Paris during the early years of the century changed so frequently and with such slight alterations that it is almost impossible to enumerate them, though, as compared with the Directoire period, there are many features of interest to be noted. There was a tendency towards wearing Eastern draperies which was probably suggested by Napoleon's Egyptian campaigns, and this is the only indication we have of any interest having been taken in Paris in connection with the mighty deeds of the French armies. Another note of colour in costume was supplied by long scarves of bright coloured silk draped over the shoulders or hung over the arms. These scarves were frequently edged with valuable fur. About this period one notices round the hem of the skirts a suggestion of the frills which were to assume such grotesque proportions later on. Sunshades of a peculiar shape now began to come into fashion. Jewellery was much worn: long ear-rings especially, and there was a craze for diamonds and topazes.

Notes of colour.

Jewellery much used.

The Empire, though it brought about great social

1809

1810

1810

changes in France, did not, at least for the first year or so of its existence, alter the fashion to any marked extent. The tendency for some time was still towards the antique and the relatively nude, but with the return of a Court, with all its imposing functions and State etiquette and festivities, women's dress gradually became more elaborate, and at length reached a point when for magnificence it has never been surpassed. The Oriental style was especially copied; richly embroidered muslins, drapery interwoven with gold and silver, or decorated with garlands of flowers, and a profusion of jewellery completed the attire of the fashionable women towards the close of the Empire period—an attire which was certainly not the least remarkable of the many changes during the evolution of fashion in the previous fourteen years.

1808–1815. Fashion in London.

Tendency still towards the antique and the nude.

Oriental styles.

In England fashion levied a very heavy tax on its votaries, and one is astonished at the extravagance displayed by many English ladies of the grand monde at a time when England was disturbed by internal polemics; the King's condition was inspiring grave anxiety, and we were at war with France. As an instance of the extravagance in dress, we might take the following description of a dress of the period: "The nuptial dress of Mrs. Wellesley Pole excelled in costliness and beauty the celebrated one worn by Lady Morpeth at the time of her marriage, which was exhibited for a fortnight at least by her mother, the late Duchess of Devonshire. The dress of the present bride consisted of a robe of real Brussels point lace, the device a single sprig; it was placed over white satin. The head was ornamented with a cottage bonnet of the same material, namely Brussels lace with two ostrich feathers. She likewise wore a deep lace veil, and a white satin pélisse trimmed with swansdown. The dress cost 700 guineas, the bonnet 150, and the veil 200. Her jewels consisted

Extravagant fashions in England at this period.

Mrs. Wellesley Pole's wedding-dress.

Cost of dress, bonnet, veil; her jewels.

1808–1815. Fashion in London.

principally of a brilliant necklace and ear-rings; the former cost twenty-five thousand guineas." As a sort of counterbalance to this inordinate expenditure we are told, however, that "Every domestic in the family of Lady Catherine Lucy has been liberally provided for. They all have had annuities settled on them for life, and Mrs. Wellesley Pole's own waiting-woman, who was nurse to her in her infancy, has been liberally considered. The fortune remaining to Mrs. Wellesley Pole may be raised to eighty thousand per annum."

The above description, of course, only refers to a toilette for a particular occasion, as it simply gives us a general idea of the current modes of the time; we learn, however, that the prevailing colours during these years were red, green, lilac or heliotrope, buff, pink, and blue, all of the very palest shades. In the morning, spencers of the above colours in figured sarsenet over a white cambric dress were in fashion—some ladies wore a dress of muslin or linen of the same shade as the spencer and trimmed with three rows of narrow ribbon. Half-boots to lace behind came in. Round hats with flat crowns were still in fashion—a flower under the brim being the favourite ornament, with a ribbon simply tied round the crown.

Current modes of the time: prevailing colours.

Hats.

Full dress.

The full dress of these times consisted of a demi-vest of sarsenet, the colour of ripe corn, irradiated from the centre of the waist, with rays of star-points, connected with small brooches of pearl or silver studs. It was trimmed round the bottom with broad rich lace; the epaulettes of the vest had short sleeves of the same lace. The under-dress was of white lustring, and the mantle or shawl of purple crape, spotted with large silver spangles or stars. These detached draperies were much admired, as contributing greatly to elegance of form, and furnishing an excuse for graceful positions of the arms. The necklace was of

1811

pearls, and double, with intermediate medallions. The hair was dressed in irregular curls round the face with a coronet à la Fanon of plate gold burnished and set with silver stars. The back of the hair, except for two or three small ringlets, was drawn up into a great net. The shoes and gloves were of white kid, and the bracelets to match the necklace. Various head-dresses and jewellery were worn, all equally becoming, as for instance the following—a Grecian head-dress with several rows of large pearls continued round the hair. With this went a necklace, earrings, and bracelet of pearls somewhat smaller than those on the head.

1808–1815. Fashion in London. Hair-dressing.

Head-dresses. Jewellery.

After the Restoration in 1814, as might be expected, we find that the modes show a tendency towards a more sober style, in keeping with the changed political and social situation.

Fashion in Paris. The Restoration.

In Paris at this time the great anxiety of all these elegant ladies appears to have been as to the choice of suitable hats, and it is said that between the Restoration and 1830 one could have easily found ten thousand different shapes in the capital—and what hats! One has but to glance at the accompanying plates to admit that an adequate choice from such a selection was indeed difficult to make. The presence of the Allied troops in Paris brought in a vogue for English, Russian, or Polish military head-dresses, and this, curiously enough, without arousing any anti-foreign feeling on the part of the French people. As a result "Chapeaux à la Russe," "à l'Anglaise," and so forth were quite à la mode for a time.

Fashions in hats.

What a change one year had made in the aspect of Paris, Lady Brownlow tells us. In 1814 there was a small sprinkling of English; in 1815 there was an English army, and the Duke and Duchess of Wellington established in a grand hôtel where they gave dinners and balls. Lord

The English in Paris after Waterloo.

1815. Fashion in Paris.

Hill in the Hôtel Montesquin, Lord Stewart in the Hôtel Montmorency, Sir L. and Lady F. Cole quartered in Madame Junot's hôtel, with Lady G. Bathurst as their guest, Lord and Lady Combermere at the Malmaison, and Sir Andrew Barnard, the English Commander of Paris! And last, though not one of the least of the curiously interesting sights of that curious time, was to see the simple, unpretending demeanour of our soldiers, who sauntered along as unconcernedly as they would have done in London.

English soldiers in Paris.

Paris crowded with English.

Troops of English flocked to Paris; many stayed only a short time, and proceeded on to Italy, but many remained, and a lot of entertaining and gaiety took place.

Lord and Lady Castlereagh.

Lord Castlereagh, who was in Paris to take part in the deliberations of the French and Allied Ministers, was joined later by Lady Castlereagh, and their fine hôtel in the Champs Élysées soon became the rendezvous for all the distinguished foreigners and the fashionable world of the Capital. "Excepting on Sundays," says Lady Brownlow, "or when there was a ball, Lady Castlereagh went most evenings to one of the theatres. She had boxes at four—the Grand Opéra, the Français, the Fédeau, and the Variétés. On her return from the theatre she received, and had a supper in the same way as in the preceding year; but how far more brilliant were the parties of 1815, both as to their number and the rank of those who attended them!

A new era of prosperity for Paris.

Waterloo, curiously enough, brought about a new era of prosperity and gaiety for Paris."

Madame de Staël in Paris.

Gronow, in his Reminiscences, tells us that he frequently met the famous Madame de Staël in Paris during the years 1815 and 1816. She was constantly at Madame Cranford's in the Rue d'Anjou Saint-Honoré, and at Lady Oxford's in the Rue de Clichy. She was very kind and affable to all the English and delighted to find herself, as she puts it, once more in sight and smell of the

(1259.)

Chapeau surmonté d'un double Diadême par-dessus de Marcellone.

Coeffure Chinoise. Pélerine et Robe de Perkale. Guêtres de Nankin.

"ruisseau de la Rue du Bal," which she once said she preferred to all the romantic scenery of Switzerland or Italy. She was, we are told, "a large, masculine-looking woman, rather coarse, and with a thoracic development worthy of a wet-nurse. She had very fine arms, which she took every opportunity of displaying, and dark, flashing eyes, beaming with wit and genius." Admirable as her writings were, her conversation surpassed them. She was "well up" on every subject. "Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit." Her Salons were filled with all the most celebrated persons of her time. Madame de Staël was, from all accounts, a little overpowering, and totally deficient in those "brilliant flashes of silence" which Sydney Smith once jokingly recommended to Macaulay.

1815. Fashion in Paris.

Her Salons.

With the return of Royalty, and with it a Court, the Salons of the Tuileries were always crowded—balls and entertainments of all sorts now being continually given in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Such festivity naturally gave a marked stimulus to trade, with the result that business everywhere was flourishing, so this was sufficient excuse for any extravagance. Paris at this time could boast four ladies' tailors of renown, thirteen modistes with big clientèles, seven remarkably good florists, three corsetières much in request, and eight ladies' bootmakers. In either private or official balls white dresses ornamented with flowers round the skirt were usually worn. The dancers wore flowers in their hair, more especially roses. One saw dresses "à l'Écossaise," dresses trimmed with chinchilla. The accessories varied much, yet although the general effect was not unpleasant there were not wanting indications that the delightful semi-classic costume of the preceding years was gradually being ousted by a less graceful mode.

Return of Royalty. The Tuileries.

Ladies' tailors, modistes, etc., in Paris.

Ball dresses.

Sometimes the sleeves were full, and raised up with

1815. Fashion in London.

several layers of "ruches," or else they were slightly puffed at the shoulders. This was the commencement of a new shape which was gradually to develop into the hideous "leg of mutton" sleeve of a few years later. The style principally in vogue at this period was graduated down to the wrist, where it was fastened with a ribbon, and the finishing touch was given by coloured kid gloves.

The "leg of mutton" sleeve.

For evening wear low-necked dresses with a showy necklace of precious stones were *de rigueur*. The sleeves were seldom more than puffs at the shoulders, and long gloves reaching only to the elbows were worn, with somewhat incongruous effect. These gloves, which were often made of chamois leather, were very expensive, but no coquette would have dreamed of wearing them more than once as they had to be perfectly speckless. For less dressy occasions short lace capes or berthas were fashionable, and in summer light scarves of the same material as the dress. In hats the poke bonnet remained in favour—adorned with a high tuft of flowers or feathers on the front or side and a chin-strap of ribbon. Jewellery in various forms (diamonds, sapphires, rubies, and garnets especially), flowers in sprays and bunches, valuable fans, reticules embroidered in passementerie, completed the toilette of an élégante in Waterloo year.

1816. Fashion in London. Fêtes to celebrate the Restoration.

In the meanwhile, "all the embassies in London vied with each other in the splendour of their several fêtes to celebrate the Restoration," says Lady Clementina Davies in her "Recollections of Society in France and England." "Balls and parties rapidly succeeded each other, but, by many foreigners of distinction at that time in England, the Caledonian Ball was considered the most remarkable. The Highland costume worn upon this occasion by all Scottish gentlemen was strange to Con-

The Caledonian Ball.

(1396.)

Chapeau de gros de Naples. Redingote de Mousseline doublée.

(1456.)

Robe de Satin, par-dessus de Crêpe.

1, Chapeaux de Velours épinglé. 2, Chapeaux de Velours plein. 3, Chapeau à fond de Gaze.

tinental eyes. Each chieftain wore his own tartan, and the combination of colour was dazzling. More amazing still to the uninitiated were the Scottish country dances, and particularly the reel, with its rapid steps, its Highland fling, and the wild yell of triumph like that of the Red Indian, shouted forth by its dancers. 1816. Fashion in London. The Highland fling.

"At that ball all Scotch ladies likewise wore their national costume according to clan, and my cousin, Mrs. Drummond Burrell, wore the Drummond tartan dress, trimmed with gold fringe, while I, who accompanied her, felt by no means displeased at myself, arrayed as I was in white trimmed with Drummond tartan, shoes to match, and a scarf of the same plaid fastened with a large brooch on the left shoulder." Scotch ladies in national costume.

London was exceptionally gay after the proclamation of peace, and festivities were the order of the day. Amongst the many vivid descriptions which have been given of the London of that date and of the scenes in the Park during the Season, not one of the least interesting is that given by Gronow: it presents a realistic picture of the fashion of the time. The company, he says, which congregated about five o'clock, was on week-days composed of ladies and gentlemen of the best society, ordinary folk modestly contenting themselves with putting in an appearance on Sundays only. The ladies used to drive into the Park in a "vis-à-vis"—a carriage which held only two persons. The hammercloth, rich in heraldic designs, the powdered footmen in smart liveries, and a coachman who assumed all the gravity and appearance of a wigged archbishop, were indispensable. These equipages were much more gorgeous than at a later period, when democracy invaded the Parks, and introduced what may be termed a "Brummagem society," with shabby-genteel carriages and liveries. Hyde Park during the Season.

1816. Fashion in London.

Amongst the most famous beauties were the Duchesses of Rutland, of Argyll, of Gordon, and of Bedford; the witty Marchioness of Conyngham; the Ladies Cowper, Anglesey, Foley, Heathcote, Lambton, Hertford, and Mountjoy. Pretty horse-breakers and ladies of the demi-monde would then as soon have thought of going to a Drawing Room as showing themselves in Hyde Park on week-days. Nor did any of the lower or middle classes think of intruding themselves in regions which, with a sort of tacit understanding, were given up exclusively to rank and fashion.

1816. Costumes allemand et françois.

(1692.)

Chapeau de pluche. Robe de Mérinos.

(1782.)

Chapeau et Toque de Velours. Robe à la Niobé, en Caroline, avec des crevés de satin.

CHAPTER VI

1820–1836. Fashion in London.

THERE now followed in England a noticeable leaning towards new and untrodden ground in the domain of fashion. No longer restrained by the trammels of the conventional semi-classical modes of previous years, London couturières, in their endeavour to attain originality, often achieved results which were quite remarkable. Starting, as usual, with the French fashion as their models, they ended by producing effects quite startling in their incongruity. From 1820 till 1832 were years of singular ugliness; a glance at the fashion-plates of the period is sufficient proof of this to the student of costume. Nothing so peculiar in its grotesqueness had been seen for many generations, yet it was considered very attractive at the time (as all modes are whilst they are in fashion) and worthy of the best literary efforts of the fashionable journal of the day, the "Belle Assemblée." How delightfully lucid for instance is the following delineation by the Editor of a "smart dress": *

Startling effects in costume.

Period of ugliness.

The "Belle Assemblée" A "smart" dress described.

"The corsage of *redingote* gowns is *en blouse,* but scarce visible because the *pelerine* being ornamented with large *dents-de-loup* reaches nearly to the wrist. Some of these are *boullonà'd* with clear muslin, and with this a scarf of *barèges* is quite *de rigueur*. *Capotes* decline in favour, but *Canezons* are getting popular. We" (says the Editor) "have just seen a Canezon of white net, back full and bust

* The italics are characteristic of the writers of the time.

1820–1836. Fashion in London.

ornamented, but we should observe that corsages for dress are ornamented *en fichu*, which is particularly becoming to belles of a slender form," for reasons which the Editor of the magazine proceeds to detail, but which it is not necessary to repeat, except that the decoration was of *tulle*. "*Tuckers à l'enfant*," he continues, "are much adopted, but long ones either ornamented with *bouillons* or *crèves* of a *transparent material* are also worn—Maltese collars or collars *à la Chevalière*, either pointed *à la Vandyck* or bound with *rouleaux*, have appeared—we have seen a dress made of a beautiful material for *rural* parties, with long *bouffant* puffs, the corsage, white satin, the sleeves of tulle, the waist *à l'antique* with ornamented flounces of *lens* in *demi parière*, with the old bias folds."

The hat to go with this delightfully simple dress, which by the way is given as for morning wear only, is thus described: it is composed of "*Spartière* ornamented with the *same material en fers de cheval*. Between the interstices of this trimming are placed bouquets of full-blown roses with their buds, crowned with a plumage of flat pink ostrich feathers. If this is not considered sufficiently elaborate the following structure is recommended—a Parisian hat of *pink* gauze ornamented with detached *sprigs* of *purple* iris, and ears of *green* corn and long lappets of pink gauze doubled in bias and tied together near the *bust*." The Editor then adds ingenuously that "the most elegant *head covering* for the *retired walk* is a *capote* of primrose coloured *Japanese gauze*, trimmed in the usual way with *Cheveaux de friese* at the edge." It reads more like a recipe from a cookery-book than the description of a dress and a hat.

Here is another in similar vein which, however, is perhaps even more humorous by reason of the familiar manner in which the writer talks with his reader—it is evidently not

Turban de crêpe, exécuté par Mr. Hyppolite jeune. Robe de velours plein, garnie de perles et franges d'argent.

1821

1822

Chapeau de gaze orné de têtes de plumes d'Autruche à côtes recouvertes de marabouts. Robe de tulle garnie de rouleaux de satin. Dessous de satin.

1824

Chapeau de bois dit paille de riz. Robe de moire garnie de bouffans de gaze et de pattes de satin par Mme Bouhot.

1826

WALKING DRESS.

Published by Joseph Robins London & Dublin June 1st 1827.

BALL DRESS.

Published by Joseph Robins, London & Dublin June 1st 1827

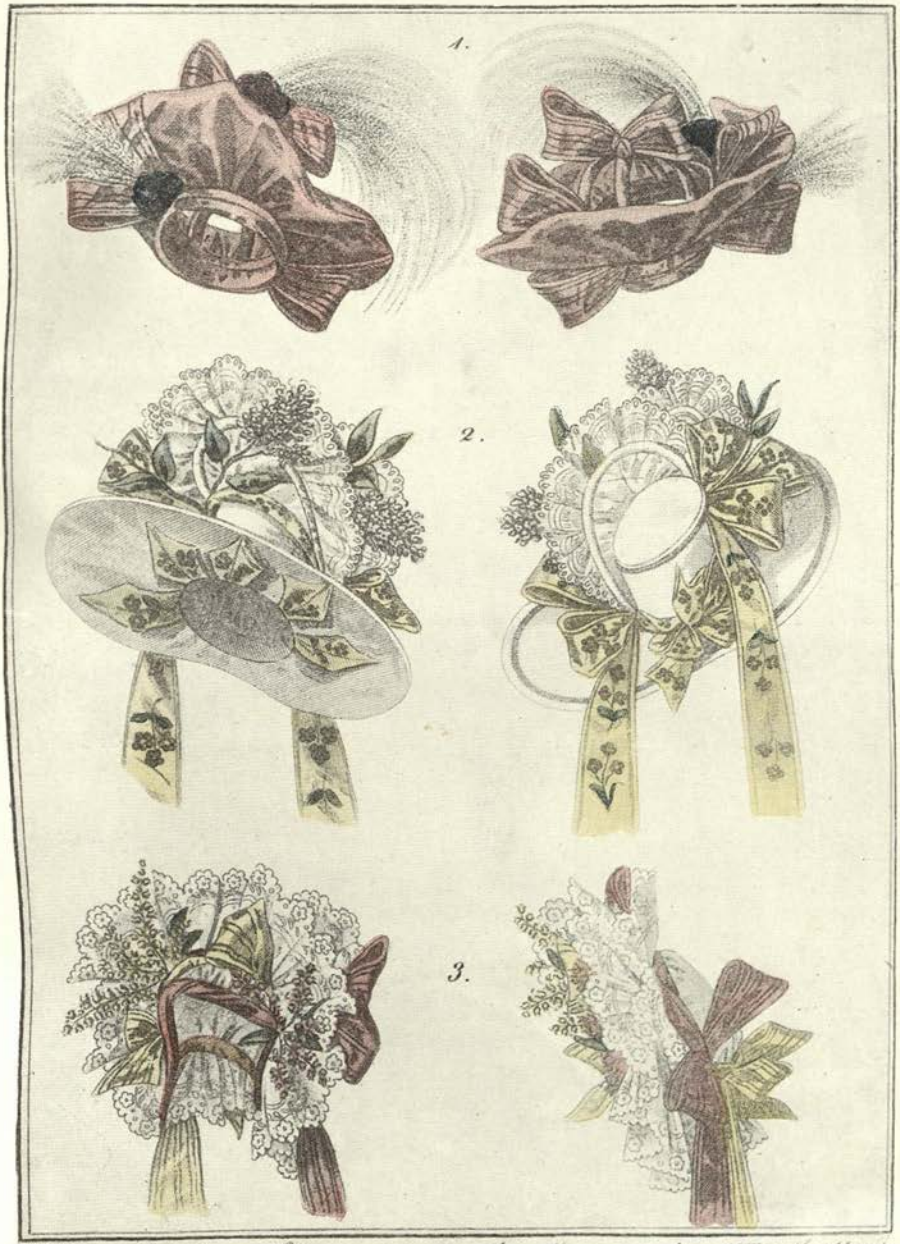
1827

Concert & Carriage Dresses, for June. 1828

Invented by Miss Pierpoint Edward St Portman Sqr

Pubd June 1. 1828 by James Robins & Co London, & Dublin

1828



1, Toque de crêpe. 2, Chapeau de crêpe du Magasin de Mme Millet, Boulevart des Italiens, N.o 20. 3, Bonnet de blonde du Magasin de Mlle Nelle

WALKING DRESS
Joseph Robins Bride Court London

BALL DRESS.
Ladies Pocket Magazine June 1 1829

Modes de Paris

Petit Courrier des Dames.

Boulevard des Italiens N° 2 près le passage de l'Opéra

Chapeau en gros de Naples. Robe en gros de Naples façon de Mme Etienne, rue St Honoré N° 206. Schall Cachemire.

1831

WALKING DRESS.

Joseph Robins

EVENING DRESS.

September 1832

1833

Coiffure ornée de fleurs Robes de satin du Louvre

Journal des Dames Rue du Helder

Chaussee d'Antin

Chapeau en Velours
Manteau en Tissu brosché

Turban Musulman
Robe en Velours des Indes
Ruches en Rubans de Satin

Capote en Satin
Manteau Merveilleux

written by one so conversant with French, but it is freely italicised as usual. It is entitled, "Summer Pelisse Costume," and the description is as follows: "A round dress made *partially high of Gros de Naples*; the colour *Terre d'Égypte*; at the border are *three flounces rather broad*, each pinked at the edge, and set in a novel and beautiful manner in scallops, every space forming the scallop *being elegantly fluted*. The flounces are set at equal, but very short, distances from each other, and are all headed by a *satin rouleau* the same colour as the dress. The corsage is laid in small plaits and fits exactly to the shape. The sleeves are *en gigot* and have rich lacings *en carreaux* on the most visible part of the sleeve in front of the arm; this lacing is of Silk *Cordon* in diamond terminated by a wrought silver button, *a double Vandyke colerette-pèlerine falls over the bust surmounted by a narrow collar of the same*; these graceful appendages are of very fine Indian muslin, beautifully embroidered. A transparent hat of *white* crape bound with *Terre d'Égypte* sarsenet and ornamented with *puffs*, others with *colours of celestial blue*; and a superb *plumage waving over the* left side consisting of two long white Ostrich feathers—the strings of this *tasteful* hat are celestial blue and *float loose*—the hair, *which is much discovered* on one side, is arranged in full curls and no cap is worn over it. A Convent Cross of white *Cornelian* dependent from a braid of hair, a *purple* reticule of gros de Naples with *gold* spring and chain—a parasol of *emerald green* and slippers of *yellow* prunella complete this *truly appropriate and elegant dress.*"

1820-1836. Fashion in London.

One would be almost tempted to wonder, were it not for the reputation of the "Belle Assemblée," whether all this is not artful satire on the part of the writer of the delineation.

Social life in London at the time of the accession and

1837. Fashion in London. during the early part of the reign of Queen Victoria presents such a marked contrast to that of the corresponding period in Paris, that it is surprising that there is not a greater difference in the fashions of the two cities. Whilst in the French capital it has been shown that light-hearted gaiety was the prevailing note, and masquerades, carnivals, and every conceivable folly the order of the day, in England a wave of austerity appeared to have spread over the country during the previous five years. Gentility and the dulness which has been so graphically described by Dickens in his word-pictures of the time, reigned supreme, with the result that a tendency towards insipidness in every form was observable and even to a great extent in women's apparel. This insipidity undoubtedly presents a certain attractiveness, and has marked the commencement of the Victorian era with an individuality quite its own. In England feminine characteristics have always been dominated by the example of the Throne. The Court has always infused, as it were, its personality into the temperament of the nation, and its manners and fashions have in consequence been more or less imitated; so there can be no doubt but that the example set by the highest ladies of the land influenced the fashion of the moment.

Contrast between Paris and London.

Gentility and dulness of the time.

English feminine characteristics of this period.

Hence it follows that Englishwomen and the modes of this period were peculiarly representative of the temperament of the young Queen, and the surroundings of the Court. The romantic simplicity of her home life appealed strongly to the feminine imagination, with the result that there was a more decided leaning for the next few years towards breaking away from conventionality and the usual attempts to copy French fashions slavishly. One has an impression of the atmosphere of Kensington Palace or Windsor Castle in all the English styles of the early years of the reign. It was a period of harp-playing, fancy needlework, and

Feminine imagination, romance, and simplicity.

Atmosphere of Kensington Palace and Windsor Castle.

1836

1836

sentimentality, inspired by the romances of Sir Walter Scott and the poems of Lord Byron; one historian even tells us that he knew many young ladies grieved because they had the appearance of being in good health, with pink and fresh cheeks, because it was "common," they said. More than one young lady, by force of wishing to look "consumptive," ended by becoming it in consequence of depriving herself of adequate food for fear of growing fat and "material." 1837. Fashion in London. Curious ideas of English girls of this period.

The quiet routine of the home life was seldom disturbed except by an occasional subscription dance and a visit to the theatre. Fashionable life, hemmed in on all sides by an awe-inspiring barrier of respectability, was naturally very restricted in its scope—it was the reign of the chaperone. Railways were still in their infancy, and the means of locomotion were wavering between the old and the new. It was a period of transition in which progress, as it is now understood, had scarcely made its way. London in the year of grace 1837 was a singularly staid and uninteresting place, yet in spite of all the conventional demureness the love of the romantic seems to have developed the emotional character of the women of the time, and to have rendered them the more readily receptive of outward impressions. To this cause therefore one must attribute the curious condition of "sensibility" which was so characteristic of the early Victorian girl. Fashionable life in these years. The love of the romantic.

The fashionable life of those days, with its routs and kettle-drums and other entertainments, has been so graphically described by Thackeray that we can almost reconstruct for ourselves the society of the times. We can picture to ourselves for instance Almacks dancing assembly, the centre of the most exclusive coterie ever initiated by society in London, or for the matter of that anywhere. "Almacks" was the name given to Willis' Fashionable life in those days. Almacks.

1837. Fashion in London.

Rooms in King Street, St. James', on the nights when the society's subscription dances were held. They were not expensive affairs in spite of their exclusiveness; for a ten-guinea subscription a series of weekly balls were given for twelve weeks. Yet it was said to be easier to get into Court than into a dance at Almacks. The entrée to these dances was considered the hall-mark of society in those days. The ladies composing the committee, who held in their hands the fate of all would-be aspirants to social recognition were the Ladies Londonderry, Cowper, Euston, Willoughby d'Eresby, Jersey, and Brownlow: from their decision there was no appeal; nor could they be called upon to give any reason for their refusal to grant tickets.

The committee of Almacks.

A matrimonial bazaar. Amusing description by Lord William Lennox.

"Almacks was a matrimonial bazaar where mothers met to carry on affairs of state," says Lord William Lennox in "Fashion Then and Now," and "often has the table, spread with tepid lemonade, weak tea, tasteless orgeat, stale cakes, and thin slices of bread-and-butter—the only refreshment allowed—been the scene of tender proposals. How often have Colinet's flageolets stifled the soft response, 'Ask mamma'? How often has the guardian Abigail in the cloak-room heard a whispered sigh followed by what vulgarians term 'popping the question,' and the faint reply of 'Yes'?"

Almacks was then in its palmy days. If a foreigner wished to see London's best sights, he was shown Ascot races on the Cup day, the drive in Hyde Park, and Almacks ball. At the upper end of the room, on a raised seat or throne, sat the all-powerful patronesses; there, we are told, might be seen the splendid figure and handsome face of the Countess of Jersey; by her side the slim but graceful form of the female representative of the Court of the Czar; there the good-humoured Lady Castlereagh, all smiles and embonpoint; the aristocratic Lady Gwydir and the dark-haired

The patronesses of Almacks.

daughter of France, Lady Tankerville ; on the side benches the lovely nieces of Rutland's duke, the peerless, afterwards the Honourable Mrs. Smith, the Countess of Chesterfield ; the sisters, Lady Caroline and Lady Jane Paget ; the Fitzclarences, the Countess of Errol ; Lord Conyngham's pretty daughter and her handsome affianced, Strathavon ; the stately Howards, the Duchess of Somerset, Lady Wilton, Lady Southampton, and the magnificent Duchess of Rutland —to name only a few of those ladies usually present who represented the grand monde of the day.

1837. Fashion in London. Some habituées of Almacks.

Distinguished among the most distinguished of the men would be the Duke of Beaufort, the handsome Earl of Errol, Lords Wilton, Uxbridge, Frank Russell, John Lyster, Frederick and Horace Seymour, and the gay and witty Alfred d'Orsay, handsomest of them all.

Distinguished men at Almacks.

So strict were the laws at Almacks that no one would be admitted after half-past eleven, and in this connection it is related that on one occasion the Duke of Wellington was refused admittance as he arrived after the time, but through the interposition of one of the lady patronesses the rule was waived for this occasion, and the " Iron Duke " was permitted to enter the doors that had been closed to others. An artful dodge was practised one evening by a noble lord who, owing to an accident to his cabriolet (at that time the fashionable vehicle), was late. Knowing full well that the laws laid down by the autocratic patronesses were like those of the Medes and Persians, and not to be broken, and that neither bribe nor threat would have any effect with the doorkeeper, he adopted the following ruse. Instead of making any attempt to enter, his lordship waited patiently in the street until the earliest party departed, and, rushing up to the carriage, pretended to wish the occupants good night, then, following the gentleman who had escorted the ladies to the carriage, he passed

The Duke of Wellington: an amusing incident.

A curious expedient.

1837. Fashion in London.

into the hall with his companions, saying he had been out to see some ladies to their carriage.

The dances in fashion at Almacks.

Amongst the dances most in fashion at this time, and which were danced to the strains of Weipperts' famous band, were the quadrille, the waltz, and the gallopade, the last a very boisterous affair indeed. The quadrille had been introduced into England from France some years previously, and had immediately caught on, but the German waltz, which was introduced in 1813, was at first regarded with much disapproval by narrow-minded chaperones, who affected to see in it all the elements of possible contamination for their charges; however, it held its own in spite of their opposition, and at last became firmly established as the favourite dance everywhere.

The quadrille.

The German waltz at Almacks.

"In London, fashion is, or was, everything," says Mr. Thomas Raikes in his "Personal Reminiscences"; "old and young returned to school, and the mornings, which had been dedicated to lounging in the Park, were now absorbed at home in practising the figures of a French quadrille, or whirling a chair round the room to learn the steps and measure of the German waltz. Lame and impotent were the first efforts, but the inspiring airs of the music, and the not less inspiring airs of the foreigners, soon rendered the English ladies enthusiastic performers. What scenes have we witnessed in those days at Almacks! What fear and trembling in the débutantes at the commencement of a waltz! What giddiness and confusion at the end!"

Violent opposition to the waltz at first.

It was partly owing to this latter circumstance that so violent an opposition soon arose to this new recreation on the score of morality. The anti-waltzing party took alarm, cried it down; mothers forbade it, and every ball-room became a scene of feud and contention. The waltzers continued their operations, but their ranks were not filled

with so many recruits as they expected. The foreigners, however, were not idle in forming their élèves; Baron Tripp, Neumann, Sainte-Aldegonde, and others persevered in spite of all the prejudice which was marshalled against them; every night the waltz was called, and new votaries, though slowly, were added to their train. Still the opposition party did not relax their efforts, sarcastic remarks flew about, and scandals were written to deter young ladies from such a recreation. The following poem was much quoted at the time:

1837. Fashion in London.

Much prejudice.

ON WALTZING

Sarcasm and scandal on the subject of the waltz.

"With timid steps and tranquil downcast glance,
Behold the well-paired couple now advance;
One hand holds hers, the other grasps her hip,
But licensed to no neighbouring part to slip,
For so the laws laid down by Baron Tripp.
In such pure postures our first parents moved,
While hand in hand through Eden's bowers they roved,
Ere Beelzebub with meaning foul and false
Turned their poor heads and taught them how to waltz."

The waltz, in spite of all this bitter controversy, gradually struggled through its difficulties. Many of the Paris dancing beaux came over to London purposely, Mr. Raikes tells us, and, with a host of others, drove the prudes into their entrenchments; and when the Emperor Alexander was seen waltzing round the room at Almacks, with his tight uniform and numerous decorations, they surrendered at discretion. There was a rather funny story going round at the time—a certain Monsieur Bourblanc, a great traveller and also very popular in society, was reported to have been captured in the South Sea Islands and eaten by savages. He was much regretted and particularly at Almacks, so much so in fact that a young lady was heard to say at one of the subsequent dances, whilst watching an awkward waltzer, 'Quel dommage qu'il n'ait pas été

The Emperor Alexander waltzes at Almacks.

A funny story.

1837. Fashion in London.

mangé par les sauvages au lieu de ce pauvre Monsieur Bourblanc ! ' "

Apart from the staid primness of the dancers, the ball-rooms of this period must have presented a very curious and unlovely appearance, for costume in the early thirties was in one of its most unattractive phases, which lasted unintermittently until the middle of the decade.

1839. The Eglinton tournament.

The year 1839 will be remembered in connection with the pageant which was held on August 29 at Eglinton Castle, the seat of Archibald, Earl of Eglinton, which was an attempted reproduction of a mediæval tournament.

John Richardson, in his account of the tournament, tells us that no pageant of any sort in modern times has equalled in its extraordinary and unique appearance the procession of the knights, barons' ladies, men-at-arms, and retainers from the gates of Eglinton Castle to the appointed lists in the park of that noble domain. This was no mere theatrical representation, but an actual presentation of a real event. The noble personages who were the most conspicuous in the gorgeous throng were the exalted, the brave, and the beautiful of the land—the élite of a great Empire ; not personating in sporting mimicry alone the deeds of their illustrious ancestors, but in their own names and titles performing those parts for the time on the great stage of the world which those ancestors had enacted before them, and in a manner bringing back to Eglinton Castle the reality as well as the reminiscences of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The tournament was a revival of the sports of the days of chivalry. It was the grandest play ever performed since the " Field of the Cloth of Gold," the most magnificent pageant that Europe has ever witnessed. Not only were the combats of the tournaments revived, not only were the joust, the mêlée, the fight at barriers with two-handed swords, the feats of archery, and all the

minor sports by which such festivals were distinguished, but there were the banquet, the endless display of magnificence, and all this was adorned by beauty, rank, and fashion. 1839.

The Queen of Beauty was Lady Seymour, the wife of Lord Seymour, the eldest son of the Duke of Somerset, and we are told in the flowery language of the epoch that no lady throughout the Empire could have been chosen whose pre-eminent attractions of face and figure, whose elegance of manners, whose correctness of taste and feminine dignity of demeanour could better have entitled her to the proud rank of "Queen of Beauty." She was on this occasion most truly

The Queen of Beauty at the Eglinton tournament.

"the admired of all admirers,"

a glittering star amidst the constellation of the most lovely of the female sex, of the most exalted in rank and fashion throughout the British Isles. The ladies attending on the Queen were the Countess of Charleville, Lady Jane Hamilton, Mrs. Garden Campbell, Miss Upton, and amongst the host of lovely women who took other parts in the proceedings were Lady Montgomery, Lady Sarah Saville, Lady Georgiana Douglas, the Honourable Miss Cathcart, the Misses Hamilton of Belle Isle, and many others; whilst to give a list of the noblemen taking part would be to quote the whole aristocracy of England. It is of interest to note that Prince Louis Napoleon, afterwards the Emperor of the French, was amongst this knightly throng. In arranging all this out-of-door splendour, however, the fickle climate of England had been overlooked, and the spectacle was completely marred by the rain which came down in torrents each day.

Ladies in attendance at the tournament.

The austerity which had marked the early years of the Victorian era gradually became somewhat relaxed

1839. Fashion in London.

in its severity, and the beau monde began to show signs of laxity in its views with regard to the exaggerated sense of propriety which had so long been a feature of English life. Vauxhall Gardens * in the early forties were very popular during the season by reason of their al fresco character, and were the fashionable rendezvous after dinner from half-past nine until the fireworks were over. The great feature was the promenade, where on a fine June or July evening hundreds of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen of what was termed "the élite of the fashion" were to be met. The moment the fireworks were over, the sedate people retired: then dancing commenced, and the boxes were filled with revellers of both sexes, whose mirth occasionally overstepped the bounds of propriety. Supper-parties were given in these boxes where the civilest of waiters attended, and where the toughest of fowls, the thinnest slices of ham, and the strongest punch were dispensed at prices that must have proved highly remunerative to the purveyors.

Vauxhall Gardens.

Supper-parties.

Amusing anecdote by Lord William Lennox.

Lord William Lennox, in his "Recollections," relates a delightfully ingenuous little anecdote in connection with a supper there one night. "I recollect," he says, "supping there with a party at which the Duke of Cleveland was present. His Grace wore the Star of the Order of the Garter, and when the bill was presented it startled us all —that is the male part. 'I think,' said the late Sir George Wombwell to the waiter, 'you act upon the old-fashioned

* They were first opened in the seventeenth century, but they underwent great improvements from 1732 under the management of Jonathan Tyers and his sons. In 1822 George IV, who had greatly frequented the Gardens before his accession, gave permission for the prefix "Royal" to be added to their title. In spite of this honour, however, Vauxhall gradually declined in favour towards the middle of the nineteenth century—the undesirable classes began to congregate there, with the inevitable result; it ceased to be a fashionable resort, and in 1859 the Gardens were finally closed and the site built over.

principle that although chickens and ham are not scarce, stars are, and we are charged accordingly.' The Duke, however, put an end to further discussion by good-humouredly saying: 'And as such is evidently the case, the wearer must pay the reckoning.'" 1839. Fashion in London.

How incongruous and undignified a scene this appears to us in the twentieth century—a noble Duke wearing the Star of the Garter at a supper-party in a public garden, bandying words with a waiter on the subject of the bill, and in the presence of ladies!

CHAPTER VII

1836. Fashion in Paris.

MADAME DE GIRARDIN, in her "Lettres Parisiennes," gives us an interesting insight into the social life of the period upon which we are now entering. "In view," she remarks, "of the recent trend towards more polite consideration between the sexes, it is not without significance that women are making sacrifices at present at the theatre. They nearly all wear small bonnets in order to give the men who happen to be sitting behind them a better chance of seeing the stage. This is generous, because when seen from a distance a bonnet is less becoming than a hat. We have," she continues, "nothing to say against a bonnet adorned with feathers: it is an elegant head-dress, but not so a bonnet trimmed with ribbons. From a distance all bonnets look alike, one cannot tell if the stuff is silk or cotton: only the flower can make a bonnet look well at a distance. For after all, what is a bonnet without flowers? Simply a lace wig, and, without prejudice, a wig is a thing rather to be avoided in general."

Women wear small bonnets at the theatre.

Madame de Girardin's ideas on bonnets.

Paris in 1836 was quite noticeably full of good-looking women; we read in fact that there were too many for the peace of the Capital—lovely English girls, handsome Italians, driven towards Paris by the cholera, and swarthy Spanish belles flying from the Civil War. Amongst this array of beauty there were also not a few beautiful Frenchwomen, which was the more striking

Lovely English and other girls in Paris at this time.

1836.

Fashion in Paris.

Beauty in fashion.

because, although under the Empire most of the women of fashion were good-looking, there had been a sort of hiatus since then. It was said at the time that "beauty had not been the fashion for some years, but in 1836 it seemed to come into vogue again, and there were many women who followed it closely."

The modes.

At this period the falling sleeves, caught up by a bracelet which has been wrongly described as a wristlet, were generally adopted. The sleeves, puffed at the upper part, and tight from the elbow downwards, were abandoned.

Fancy-work.

Fancy handkerchiefs in all varieties of expensive material were very much in fashion, with rich embroideries and insertions of lace and open work, whilst the borders were often made of fancy-work in silk representing birds and so forth; but, needless to add, these artistic productions were rather for ornament than use. There were besides these gorgeous articles, which were only used on high days and holidays, a number of other more simple and less expensive ones which were equally attractive, indeed, so much so, that a weeping woman, it was remarked, could find consolation in her trouble by merely looking at them.

The modes.

Marabout came into fashion again this year, after an absence of ten years from the toilettes of the élégantes.

Bouquets.

The vogue of carrying bouquets at balls was very characteristic of this time and reached the limit of gaudy extravagance. In the centre would be placed five or six camellias raised up to form a pyramid, intermingled with green foliage; all round would be violets and heather, or some hothouse flowers. These bouquets were fixed in a small plain or jewelled gold clasp, to which was fastened a bracelet with chain so that the bouquet could be dropped and remain suspended from the wrist. Several times this charming fantasy has reappeared with slight variations in the shape of the clasp or holder, for Fashion, like Fortune,

1837. Fashion in Paris.

has a wheel which is continually revolving and bringing back the same things at stated intervals.

Ballooning.

The favourite hobby, or rather sport, amongst the élite in Paris was ballooning, and every one who could afford it would go in for it, the ladies being particularly enthusiastic, one learns; so much so in fact that to be present at the departure of a balloon in the morning and to be seen at a big ball at night was considered the height of "smartness." They told a story of one of these aërial travellers, a waltzer very much in repute, who commenced the evening dance early in the morning by filling up his dance programme as he stood in the car of his balloon, ready to start; his last words to a fair lady bystander, as he rose in the air, being: "Don't forget you have promised me the first waltz to-night." Sure enough he was at the ball, and no one seeing him waltz so composedly would have imagined he had been such a long journey to get to it.

The height of "smartness."

Paris exceptionally gay this year.

Paris was exceptionally gay this year. Dancing was the order of the day, so Paris danced all through the Season.

The ball at the Austrian Embassy.

The ball at the Austrian Embassy was long talked of on account of its remarkable exhibition of jewellery. Nothing like it had ever been seen before. One wit, indeed, spoke of it as a "bal de bijoutiers." Nevertheless it was the talk of the Season.

Diamonds the rage.

Diamonds were the rage of the year, to the prejudice for the moment of all other gems, and were worn on every possible occasion and with every grande toilette, it being said that ladies wore all they possessed, and even more. At the ball in question every one was talking about the magnificent diamonds a certain noble duchess was wearing. "Have you seen them?" was the remark heard on all sides. "She must have at least two millions of francs' worth on her head alone." And people hurried through the Salons in order to see this wonderful tiara, and crowded round the lady, whose beautiful face was probably

Wonderful tiara.

more attractive to many of the men than the wonderful gems she was wearing. 1837. Fashion in Paris.

Amongst the many other fêtes and balls that made this an exceptionally brilliant year in Paris was the fancy-dress ball given for the benefit of the English poor. It was such a success that an attempt was made to copy it. This ball given for an English charity inspired Madame de Girardin to write in one of her letters an amusing diatribe on the English girl of the period in Paris, which is worth giving in extenso: Fancy-dress ball given for the benefit of the English poor. Amusing letter of Madame de Girardin on English girls.

"How fond we are of fancy-dress balls!" she exclaims. "Beautiful women appear even more beautiful, and under a new aspect, whilst plain women, carried away by a brilliant imagination, show themselves off for our amusement. The English girls are above all things so frank in their attire. For if we admire the pretty English women with bitterness and envy, we also appreciate with amusement the fantastic beauties which it pleases 'la perfide Albion' to send us, and we will say to her double glory, that if the modern Venus, that is to say the Goddess of Beauty arose from the English Channel, the other Goddess, who shall be nameless, surged already apparelled from the horrified waters of the Thames. To be frank, we will admit this double supremacy in our neighbours across the Channel—the honour of providing our fêtes with the most beautiful women,—and also the most remarkable in the opposite sense. The English women are nothing by halves; they are the perfection of beauty, or they are the extreme of ugliness, and they then cease to be women: they are fossilised beings, unknown to creation, the infinitely varied species of which defy classification. One looks like an old horse, another an old bird. Several remind one of the dromedary, others the bison. All these, when quietly seated in a ball-room, modestly dressed, ugly though they Frank criticism of English women.

1837. Fashion in Paris.

may be, one does not notice, but in a Costume Ball these decked out and bedizened individuals, these strangely coloured and curiously animated faces, all their displayed charms, can you not imagine the marvellous effect?

English women at a fancy-dress ball.

"If you had seen these fantastic beings the other evening wandering through the *Salle Ventadour* with seven or eight feathers on their heads, blue, red, black, peacock's feathers, cock's feathers, feathers of all sorts, every one adorned with the spoils of the chase; if you had seen the assurance and pride of all these apparitions, and the self-satisfied glances in the looking-glasses when passing, and the officious hand putting in order any disarrangement of the dress, and the solitary curl ornamenting the forehead, *pulled religiously* down on to the nose that it resists protecting, and from which it ought never to have been moved, and the little yellow or brown shoe trimmed with red and blue, which is put forward so gracefully, and the unexpected 'shellfish' on any costume, and this wealth of little ornaments surprised to find themselves together, this confusion of taste, these thousand jewel-cases opened in one evening . . . you would agree with me, a Costume Ball is very amusing. Ah! if ever one offers to show all this again for a louis, give it quickly—you will never regret it."

Candid criticism of English-women by an Englishman.

This strikes one as somewhat unnecessarily outspoken criticism, but it is not more candid than the following from a London paper of the same year, written by an Englishman, doubtless!

"It is but too true," says the writer, "that at this season there are some of our fair countrywomen who stride or stroll, as the case may be, about the great thoroughfares of Paris, attired in a way to make themselves even worse than ridiculous. They look untidy, they look unclean, they look in every respect unladylike. And—what is the worst of all—they were, till the mighty Jupiter of the

Press thundered at them, utterly unconscious that there was anything strange about them. It is quite a mistake, I suppose, that the offenders commit their crimes of *lèse toilette* with *malice prepense*: that there is premeditation in the evildoing, and that it springs from an insular disdain for the people of all countries whatsoever whose birthplace lies beyond the sacred realms of Britain. Alas! No! The female delinquents, at all events (we will leave out their male companions), commit this unconsciously, they say, poor things, because they know not what they do. 1837. Fashion in Paris.

"Here is the fault, a grievous educational fault, we submit; but here is also the source of the possible remedy. The women who walk through the streets of Paris, so accoutred that we cannot blame the French for laughing at them in any conceivable way are women who would, in their own dwelling-places in England, dress in exactly the same way. They are not women who dress becomingly in one place, and unbecomingly in another, because 'it does not signify.' No woman does that, even the most virtuous of matrons; they are simply women who do not know what is becoming or unbecoming. They do not know it because they have not been taught to know it. There are two things which tend to make the ordinary run of Englishwomen dress ill: first that they are never led to seek the relations, the *rapports*, between their outward garb and themselves; and secondly that they are totally devoid of the sense of management. An Englishwoman sets about buying a dress for herself as though she was buying it for somebody else. Dress is, with her, an abstraction. She does not think of how this shade of blue, or that shade of green, will or will not harmonise with the tints of the skin, and with her hair and eyes; she does not dream of composing her own dress so as to make it set her off; but she, in a businesslike manner, contracts with a

Badly dressed Englishwomen laughed at by French people.

Englishwomen devoid of any sense of management.

No taste.

1837. Fashion in Paris.

dressmaker to furnish her such or such a covering, just as a speculator in small villas contracts for his roofs or his pipes. This is what happens with the ordinary run of Englishwomen, with nine-tenths of all those who in both town and country mix, as it is called, in the world to make excursions to foreign lands.

Origin of bad taste of Englishwomen.

"Here then is the main origin of all the enormities of our countrywomen; they either look upon dress as a pure abstraction, equally applicable to every individual alike, or they regard it from the utilitarian point of view, and adopt no matter what vestment, however shabby or ugly, so long as it serves the purpose for which they require it. But the other cause of their errors is one scarcely less serious. They are absolutely ignorant of that 'science of management' by the art of which a needy Parisian lady contrives to get herself up so as to outdo her wealthy sisters of any race. This art may be traced throughout the lives of both. The Englishwoman can do whatever is required of her, if you only give her plenty of means. It is money she wants, and when she has got it, she does know what to do with it. If she is rich, very rich, she knows how to dress and to keep house, and give dinners; but the Frenchwoman knows how to do all this upon very small means. If to their managing capacity you add a due recognition of the suitable and unsuitable, so far as her own self is concerned, a delicate, artistic sense of what her own face and figure require, you will soon get rid of the untidy apparitions of which we have lately heard so many complaints. It is not in woman to make herself ugly, if she knows better; it is only when she really has never been taught how to fulfil it that she neglects that 'prime duty of looking well,' as the author of "Eöthen" calls it.

"science of management."

Englishwoman compared with Frenchwoman.

"There is no more complete mistake nowadays than to say that in the higher classes of society in this country

women dress ill—they do no such thing. The English- 1837.
women of London drawing-rooms dress remarkably well, Fashion in Paris.
so long as it is a question of dressing to be looked at, and spending any amount of money on it. But deprive even these women, who have the taste, of the unlimited command of money, and they too would become slatterns from despair because they are ignorant of the art of dressing agreeably on narrow means. It is not true that the well-educated Englishwoman is wanting in taste. It is so thoroughly the reverse of true, that all the current fashion has latterly been turned from its habitual channel, and Paris has copied Paris copies London.
London, not London Paris. The hat that threatens to banish the bonnet for a long period of time from all young and handsome heads throughout Europe, the riding or Gipsy hat, or any, in short, of the hundred various hats that are now a universal fashion—these are a purely Britannic invention—as is also the coquettish red petticoat, and the Red petticoats.
looped-up gown, and the double-laced Balmoral shoe. But Balmoral shoes.
where is now the Court in the civilised world where the English inventions are not 'at home'?

"But then this is not dressing for dressing's sake, but Dressing for a purpose—an English trait.
dressing for a purpose. This again is an English trait. We do all things for an object, and the objects of the hats and the red petticoats and the tucked-up gowns were originally to set the climate at defiance. All these pretty things would never have been invented if their use had not first made itself evident, but when the want of them was recognised, it was supplied by inventions in the very best and most fitting taste. What our countrywomen know nothing about is dressing for the mere purpose of looking their best at all times. If they did, there is not one of them who would go stalking about as too many of them do now in the innocence of ungainliness. It is certain that if a Parisian were to allow herself the carelessness of an

1837. Fashion in Paris.

Englishwoman, she would be a species of scarecrow, and that half of her ingenuity is inspired by self-defence; but that is no reason why better-looking women should treat the forms God has given them with contempt. 'Les filles de la Grèce sont ici,' has said a very great foreign sculptor now resident in England, but a bevy of Grecian statues standing about in mackintoshes and mushroom hats is not a pleasing sight.

Grecian statues in mackintoshes.

Englishwomen wanting in coquetterie.

"If only the ordinary run of Englishwomen had a little more coquetterie, namely, some knowledge of what is becoming or unbecoming, and some familiarity of what is called 'l'art des Chiffons,' we should all be the gainers thereby; they would learn that to be prettily dressed it is not necessary to spend thousands of pounds, and the stay-at-home public would escape being made to blush for the wandering compatriots whose fame is that of '*Les Anglaises pour rire!*'" *

"*Les Anglaises pour rire!*"

The Tivoli Gardens.

One of the principal rendezvous of the élite at this time was the Tivoli Gardens, where tournaments and fêtes were given, and where the latest fashions and the most beautiful women in Paris were always to be seen.† These gardens, which were situated right in the very heart of Paris (where the Passage de Tivoli in the Rue St. Lazare now stands), were for a great number of years a favourite resort of Parisians, and have been described several times by that

* This article was written seventy-five years ago, yet how much of the criticism still holds good!

† They must not be confused with the "Tivoli" which existed at the time of the Directoire, and which was previously known as the "Jardin Boutain." That garden, which had, apart from its social features, a semi-political aspect, was situated where the Rue de Londres now stands. During the Directoire it was the scene of one of Madame Tallien's famous processions of "Incroyables" and "Merveilleuses"; it was also the rendezvous of a group of young reactionaries who went by the name of "Clichiens." Napoleon gave a big banquet in the grounds on his return from one of his victorious campaigns.

witty writer, Paul de Kock, in his romances of the period. They were at the zenith of their vogue at the time of the Restoration, when even the Duchesse de Berry did not disdain to assist at several of the fêtes. The place appears from the description of it to have been a sort of glorified fair, where *Montagnes russes*, mountebanks, strong men, fireworks, a big orchestra, and a ball-room combined to attract Parisians on fine evenings.

1837. Fashion in Paris.

The costume ball arranged by Musard at the Opéra this year was extremely well attended, and six thousand people in the most varied attire managed to get into the building, whilst almost as many were turned away for want of space. The crowd was frightful, and the dancing degenerated into a veritable pandemonium. A young man was unlucky enough to fall in the middle of the galop, and the whole stream of dancers passed over him—he was picked up and taken away in a very serious condition.

Musard's costume ball at the Opéra.

A pandemonium.

An accident dancing the galop.

Two amusing practical jokes which were played at the Opera House whilst these costume balls were at the zenith of their popularity are worth recounting, as they convey a particularly good idea of the raciness of the time. On one occasion a well-known author and an equally distinguished artist took a live bear to the ball; it was a fine big specimen of a grizzly, and as soon as it appeared in the ball-room every one, thinking of course that it was some masquerader in an exceptionally successful costume, crowded round it, exclaiming, "Oh! isn't it natural?" and so forth. Then the ladies began to tickle it with their fans, to pull its fur, and tease it in different ways. Meanwhile the two perpetrators of the joke had discreetly withdrawn to a distance, to watch better what was going to happen. The bear stood the onslaught of the fair tormentors quietly for a few minutes, when it suddenly lost its temper, gave a sharp blow with its paw on the bare arm of one of

Practical jokes at the Opera House. Costume balls.

1837. Fashion in Paris.

the ladies, and displayed its teeth in an ugly and unmistakable manner. It did not need the horrified shriek of the lady to let the bystanders know that it was no imitation bear in front of them, the look in the eyes of the animal was sufficient, and in an instant the whole ball-room was in a state of uproar, during which the authors of the joke slipped quietly away, leaving the bear behind them. Gendarmes were called in to remove the animal, a task which proved somewhat risky, as it evinced a desire to argue over the matter, but eventually it was coaxed out and conducted to the pound. The owners were allowed to fetch it away after the usual *procès verbal* and the payment of the fine for their conduct.

Winning a wager at costume ball at the Opera House.

The other incident, although also a practical joke, was carried out for a bet. It is related that a well-known clubman had wagered he would bring to the ball a good-looking woman who would be wearing absolutely nothing but a boa and her gloves. The wager was accepted. To find the "lady" willing to help to win the bet was not a difficult matter in Paris in those sporting times, and the stake was won by means of her making her entrance enveloped in a large mantle which, when she was right in the centre of the ball-room, was suddenly whisked off, when she stood like Phryne before the Tribunal, with the exception of the boa and the gloves *bien entendu*. It is not related whether the dancers were very shocked at the unwonted spectacle in a public ball-room, of feminine loveliness *in puris naturalibus*; but we are told that the consequence of this daring coup was somewhat disagreeable for the authors of it, though the amount of the bet sufficiently repaid them after the authorities had been satisfied.

The rowdiness of these balls and those given by Tallien soon began to attract the attention of the inevitable

1838

moralists, but their admonitions and censure did not carry much weight. There had been too many scandals in connection with the religious carnivals for such smaller breaches of conventionality to be held of much importance. 1837. Fashion in Paris.

In the midst of all this liveliness, influenza made its appearance in Paris, and everybody caught it, and was laid up, but it made little or no difference to arrangements. Madame de Girardin says: "And yet the balls went on, one danced, one tried on gowns, one had one's hair dressed, and crowned oneself with flowers between the fits of coughing. Women in the morning were shivering, sleepy, and made up into bundles of hoods, veils, and fichus: one pitied them, one groaned with them, one advised them to take a lot of care of themselves, and one left them with a feeling of anxiety—and in the evening one found them at some ball, looking radiant, head up in air, feathered and bejewelled, the shoulders nude, arms nude, and feet nude, for one could not call the spider-web silk stockings a covering. And you saw them dancing and enjoying themselves as though they were quite well again. And what did this prove? That the fashionable woman would rather die than refuse herself a pleasure—that she lived for the world, the balls, concerts, that her health was sacrificed to empty amusement, that home life with its sameness and boredom had no charm for her." Ailing élégantes. Unable to resist dancing. The fashionable woman's life of pleasure.

These social butterflies represented the spirit of the age they lived in. Dame Fashion was once again in one of her extravagant moods. This time one reads of the most fantastic adornment for the head. The turban was the vogue with evening dress, and judging from the fashion-plates it was at times a weird and fearsome article. They were made of various materials—gold brocade, lace, gauze, tulle silk—anything that came handy apparently, so long as the stuff was expensive enough. There were modistes Social butterflies. Fashions of the year. Turbans.

1837. Fashion in Paris.

who made specialities of the various styles, so there was no difficulty in getting one to suit any particular type, as there were turbans de fantaisie, turbans jeunes, turbans classiques, turbans maternes. Ornaments were worn on the temples instead of small combs, or rather were worn above the small combs they served to hide. They hung from an invisible wire. A lot of jewellery was still worn, diamonds, emeralds, rubies. Elaborate hair-dressing evidently occupied a good deal of the time of the lady of fashion at this period, judging from the sudden profusion of locks and curls she displayed—in fact, one is tempted to throw out a conjecture as to where they all came from.

Much jewellery worn.

1839

CHAPTER VIII

SALONS, somewhat on the lines of those so much seen evidence in Paris, came into vogue in London, and soon became the rendezvous of all that was witty and brilliant in the Metropolis. Madame de Staël's well-known saying, "Le gênie n'a pas de sexe," could be given as an explanation for the extraordinary development of these centres of feminine intellect and influence which from their inception exercised enormous persuasive power over the tendencies of their habituées; and it is not outside the mark to state that each French coterie, from this cause, bore its own distinctive characteristics.

1839–1840. Fashion in London. The Salons.

"George Eliot" was the first in England to recognise their influence in developing and stimulating talent in both sexes. "They alone," says the great English authoress, "have had a vital influence on the development of literature. For in France the mind of woman has passed, like an electric current, through the language, making crisp and definite what is elsewhere heavy and blurred; in France, if the writings of women and their deeds were swept away, a serious gap would be made in the national history." And she attributes this superiority of Frenchwomen, amongst other reasons, to their high moral courage and inherent tact. One cannot do better than again to give in her own words her keen-sighted definition of the grounds for this superiority, namely, to the "small brain and vivacious temperament which permit the fragile system of woman to sustain the superlative

"George Eliot" on their influence.

The Frenchwoman's superiority.

The reason of the superiority of the Frenchwoman.

1839-1840. Fashion in London.

activity requisite for intellectual creativeness," whereas "the larger brain and slower temperament of the English and Germans are in the womanly organisation generally dreamy and passive. So that the physique of a woman may suffice as the substratum for a superior Gallic mind, but is too thin a soil for a superior Teutonic one."

The three chief London Salons.

Like their Paris prototypes these London Salons were therefore presided over by women, and three at least of these coteries were destined to become famous in the history of feminine fashion, though it would be invidious, however, to compare any of them with the Paris Salons, as they were neither typically representative of party nor of fashion—they were more the rendezvous of society and artistic cliques. For London they constituted quite an innovation, and whilst the novelty lasted they were much frequented.

Lady Holland Lady Blessington, "George Eliot."

The three principal Salons were those of Lady Holland, Lady Blessington, and "George Eliot," who divided the honours of entertaining London's most distinguished folk of the period; and not to have the entrée to one or other of the famous Salons was to be unknown to fame.

Lady Blessington's Salons.

"Everybody goes to Lady Blessington," wrote Hadyn in his diary, and at 11, St. James' Square, or afterwards at Seamore Place, or later in Gore House, Kensington, hospitality on the most lavish scale was dispensed for some years. "The most gorgeous Lady Blessington," of whom

Lawrence's portrait.

it is said Lawrence painted his finest portrait, and who has been represented as one of the most beautiful as well as one of the most fascinating women of her time, has been variously described, and there are probably few women who have been so greatly discussed. The reason, however, of her fame has always been enveloped in a certain amount

Divergence of opinion of her numerous biographers.

of mystery owing to the divergence of opinion expressed by her numerous biographers, whilst Lawrence's presentment of her in his famous portrait above referred to does

not convey an impression of so much loveliness as was generally attributed to her; although perhaps this may be explained by the knowledge that she had her own particular ideas as to what became her. 1839-1840. Fashion in London.

"She always wore a peculiar costume," Gronow tells us, "chosen with artistic taste to suit exactly her style of beauty. The cap she was in the habit of wearing has been drawn in Chalon's portrait of her, well known from the print in the 'Keepsake' and in all the shop-windows of the day. It was a 'mob-cap' behind, drawn in a straight line over the forehead, where, after a slight fulness on each temple, giving it a little the appearance of wings, it was drawn down close over the cheeks, and fastened under the chin. Nothing could have been more cunningly devised to show off the fair brow and beautifully shaped oval face of the deviser, or to conceal the too great width of the cheeks and a premature development of double-chin." Gronow's description of Lady Blessington.

Lady Blessington had also a style of dress suitable to her figure, which was full, but then not of "o'er-grown bulk." She always wore white in the morning, a thick muslin dress, embroidered in front and lined with some bright colour, and a large silk bonnet and cloak to match. This was her costume in London; but on her arrival in Paris, two or three French ladies got hold of her, declared she was "horriblement fagotée," and insisted on having her dressed in quite a different style by a fashionable couturière. They managed so completely to transform her that in the opinion of all who had seen her in England her defects were accentuated, and all her beauty disappeared. But, nevertheless, in her new and unbecoming attire, she was pronounced charmante by a jury of fashionable dames, and forced nolens volens to take an eternal farewell to the lovely and becoming costumes of her youth. Lady Blessington: her usual dress.

Greville, who was evidently a frequent visitor at Gore

1839-1840. Fashion in London. Greville's description of Lady Blessington's Salon.

House, and had accepted much hospitality from Lady Blessington, repays his debt by writing the most virulent things about his hostess in his "memoirs." They are probably true pictures of the celebrated Salon, and as such are of interest here, but are none the less unpleasant reading, as, for instance, the following tirade, which for acrimonious verbosity, malevolence, and bad taste is probably unequalled in literature:

"Her house is furnished with a luxury and splendour not to be surpassed: her dinners are frequent and good: and d'Orsay does the honours with a frankness and cordiality which are very successful: but all this does not make Society in the real meaning of the term. There is a vast deal of coming and going, and eating and drinking, and a corresponding amount of noise, but little or no conversation, discussion, easy, quiet interchange of ideas and opinions, no regular social foundation of men, intellectual or literary, ensuring a perennial flow of conversation, and which, if it existed, would derive strength and assistance from the light superstructure of occasional visitors with the much or the little they might occasionally contribute. The result of this is, that the woman herself, who must give the tone to her own society, and influence its characters, is ignorant, vulgar, and common-place. Nothing can be more dull and uninteresting than her conversation, which is never enriched by a particle of knowledge, or enlivened by a ray of genius or imagination.

"The fact of her existence as an authoress is an enigma, poor as her pretensions are; for while it is very difficult to write good books, it is not easy to compose even bad ones, and volumes have come forth under her name for which hundreds of pounds have been paid, because (Heaven only can tell how) thousands are found who will read them. Her name is eternally before the public: she produces

1840

1841

1839-1840. Fashion in London.

those gorgeous inanities called 'Books of Beauty,' and other trashy things of the same description, to get up which, all the fashion and beauty, the taste and talent, of London is laid under contribution. The most distinguished artists, the best engravers, supply the portraits of the prettiest woman in London, and these are illustrated with poetical effusions of the smallest possible merit, but exciting interest and curiosity from the notoriety of their authors: and so, by all this puffing and stuffing and untiring industry and practising on the vanity of some and the good-nature of others, the end is attained: and though I never met any individual who had read any of her books, except the conversations with Byron, which are too good to be hers, they are unquestionably a source of considerable profit, and she takes her place confidently and complacently as one of the literary celebrities of the day."

Lady Blessington an authoress.

The reader will, however, no doubt conclude that Lady Blessington was possessed of more talent and good qualities than Greville in his uncharitable diatribe chose to concede to her.

1840-1845. Lady Holland's Salon.

At Holland House, where Lady Holland held her Salon, gatherings were more of a political character. Opinions seem again to have been divided as to the charms of "these delightful feasts of reason," as Fitzgerald calls them, and the attractions of the picturesque and ancient mansion at Kensington. If after reading the glowing retrospect by Talfourd on a dinner-party at Holland House, one turns to the ponderous phraseology of Macaulay, describing in undisguised terms of adulation his own impressions of a later entertainment, one feels that probably a great deal of what has been written as having taken place at these famous gatherings is much exaggerated.

Greville, in his memoirs, appears to give the most vivid and unflattering description of the life in this particular

1840–1845. Fashion in London.

house; though his succinct narrative conveys the impression that it was not entirely the personal attractions of the hostess that drew the crowd there, for from all accounts Lady Holland could be a singularly rude and disagreeable person at times, but rather that the house was a charming sort of exclusive club where one met most distinguished company, and where the cuisine and the cellars were alike excellent. One is, however, struck with a peculiarity in connection with these Salons, quite in contradistinction to their French prototypes—the guests were always of the male sex, the most distinguished of their day in their various walks of life, as one is forced to admit when one reads such names as Lord Byron, D'Israeli, Savage Landor, Talleyrand, Edward Bulwer Lytton, Count d'Orsay, Lord Macaulay, Lord Palmerston, Sir Thomas Lawrence, Earl Grey, Lord Brougham, to mention only a few of the most famous men who were bidden to these gatherings, or rather to the court of these two queens of London fashion. It is inexpedient to insist on the reason for this curious exclusiveness, which perhaps in the case of Lady Blessington is obvious, but it should be noted, as it was one of the characteristics of these Salons.

Lady Holland and her friends.

Death of Lady Holland and break-up of her Salon.

With the death of Lady Holland, the famous gatherings in the old house at Kensington came to an end, and with their break-up a big hiatus in social life in London took place which has never been really filled up. Lady Holland was undoubtedly one of the characters of her day, and "though she was a woman for whom nobody felt any affection," as Greville, with his accustomed venom, tells us, "and whose death therefore will have excited no grief, she will be regretted by a great many people, some from kindly, more from selfish, motives, and all who had been accustomed to live at Holland House, and continued to be its habituées, will lament the fall of the curtain on that big

Lady Holland according to Greville.

1842

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drama, and the final extinction of the flickering remnant of a social light which illuminated and adorned England, and even Europe, for half a century." 1840–1845. Fashion in London.

The world never has seen and never will again see anything like Holland House. Lady Holland contrived to assemble round her, to the last, a great society, comprising almost everybody that was conspicuous, remarkable, and agreeable. She was a very strange woman, whose character it would not be easy to describe, and who can only be perfectly understood from a knowledge and consideration of her habits and peculiarities. She was often capricious, tyrannical, and troublesome, liking to provoke, disappoint, and thwart her acquaintances, and she was often obliging, good-natured, and considerate to the same people. She was always intensely selfish, dreading solitude above everything, and eventually working to enlarge the circle of her society, and to retain all who ever came within it. She could not live alone for a single minute, she never was alone, and even in her moments of greatest grief it was not in solitude but in society that she sought her consolation. Though she was always surrounded by clever people, there was no person of any position in the world, no matter how frivolous or foolish, whose acquaintance she was not eager to cultivate, and she had a rage for knowing new people, and going to fresh houses. While her society was naturally and inevitably of a particular political colour, it was her great object to establish in it a tone of moderation and general toleration, so that no person of any party, opinion, profession, or persuasion might feel any difficulty in coming to her house. Character of Lady Holland.

"George Eliot's" Sunday afternoon receptions were much nearer the conception of a French Salon than any other that had existed hitherto in London. To a certain extent they filled the gap caused by the ending of the receptions 1845. "George Eliot's" Sunday afternoons.

1845. Fashion in London.

at Holland House after the death of Lady Holland, and although they were of a less aristocratic nature, they became fashionable as time went on. She had somewhat of the intuition of Lady Holland in discovering rising and yet struggling geniuses, and any such who were invited to the intimacy of her circle were sure to find there the warmest welcome.

"George Eliot"; her personality and charm.

Never a beautiful woman, "George Eliot" had a personality which by reason of its charm and simplicity exercised an extraordinary fascination over all with whom she came in contact. Her pleasant laugh and smile were full of sympathy; to a rich silvery voice she added a natural ease of conversation which was a reflection of the style of her writing. Her frail physique and the face with the strongly marked features gave an impression all the same of extraordinary femininity and of the originality which is so marked a feature of her books. Although her Salons or rather Sunday afternoon receptions had no bearing on the social aspects of the time in the sense of their French prototypes, still some of the most distinguished people of her day were to be met there. One might have seen amongst others Herbert Spencer; Mr. and Mrs. Burne Jones; Robert Browning, who would give long dissertations on some philosophical subject; Lady Castletown and her daughters; Alfred Tennyson, who would occasionally read aloud some of his poems to the delighted circle; Sir Theodore and Lady Martin; John Everett Millais, big and burly, a typical John Bull, full of enthusiasm for his art, and of schemes for future work; Lord Houghton, and Professor Huxley—to mention only a few famous names.

This brief outline of these Salons will be sufficient to convey an idea of how far London had taken its ideas from Paris in regard to this as well as other fashions.

1844

CHAPTER IX

1838–1840.

Fashion in Paris.

The Parisienne of the period.

THE Parisienne at this period presents a curious study of insouciance. Extravagant in her toilette to a degree which had never been surpassed, her Salons furnished with a magnificence that amazes one even now in these twentieth-century times, she yet lived in the midst of a curious combination of luxury and coarseness. It was a time when everything, to be quite the "ton," had to be sporting, and therefore, to be the real "sportsman" the men dressed themselves as much like Englishmen as they always imagined them in those days, the result being that they generally looked like stablemen, and it was considered not at all bad form for a gentleman to pay a visit to a lady attired in his riding-suit, covered with dust, with dirty top-boots, and reeking of tobacco. It was a sure proof that he had just returned from the Bois, and therefore this negligence in his costume was quite pardonable. His hostess, however, would receive this grotesque and unclean individual in her dainty salon or boudoir, garbed most probably in the most bewitching costume, the very latest creation of Palmyre or Herbaut. One cannot nowadays comprehend the peculiar apathy of the women of that time, condoning such unpleasant idiosyncrasies. This slovenliness was carried even further in the evening, for men appeared at balls or receptions in the most unconventional costumes, and wearing lace-boots. The contrast between the sexes in the world of fashion at this period was

Sporting "ton."

Frenchmen dressed like stablemen.

Apathy of the women.

Slovenliness of men's dress.

1838–1840. Fashion in Paris. Gavarni's drawing.

very curious, and the inimitable crayon of Gavarni has recorded it with delightful humour.

What, however, strikes one as the most amusing side of this state of affairs, is that for some time previously we learn that an agitation had been afoot to bring about an improvement in feminine attire, which was getting more and more expensive. The men had actually been endeavouring

English ideas of economy.

to introduce English ideas of economy and simplicity into the dress of the fair sex. Obviously it was to their advantage, since they had to pay for it, but they were not

Madame de Girardin on the credulity of women.

destined to have their egotistic way for long, as Madame de Girardin tells us in one of her entertaining letters.

"To-day," she says (writing in 1838), "women have found that they have been the dupes of a plot, and that their credulity has carried them too far. The men said:

A "genteel" woman.

'A genteel, comme il faut woman ought to avoid all that would cause her to attract attention: dresses which are too showy, jewellery, flowers, feathers, ought only to be

The "genteel" women at the theatre.

worn on important occasions.' And genteel women, in their simplicity and good-nature, went to the theatres with modest hoods, with the most simple of wadded silk gowns, very high pleated collarettes, and sat themselves down in the corners of their boxes like wallflowers of good company.

"And in the middle of the performance there appeared

A dazzling vision in the stage boxes.

in one of the stage boxes a dazzling vision—a woman who was not very much better-looking than the others, but who was so smartly dressed that one could not help admiring her all the same. She had three enormous feathers on her hat, a garland of roses under the selfsame hat, and a horseshoe in diamonds supporting the garland. It was really too much: the taste that had suggested this display was more than doubtful, but the garland was of charming roses, and the general appearance was very becoming. This woman had on a low-cut bodice with short sleeves, which was

unbecoming: certainly this was not a comme il faut woman —one could never have mistaken her for what she was; this showiness betrayed finery worn with premeditation, but this finery produced an effect, and in contrast to this atrociously dressed woman the toilettes of the other women seemed poor and mean; and the men exclaimed, 'She is horribly made up, but she has a lot of style about her!' and they spent the whole evening looking at her through their opera-glasses: they were interested only in her, and as soon as there was an entr'acte and they had an excuse for going out, they quickly left the genteel and distinguished-looking women with whom they had come, in order to find out the name of her whose dress was so vulgar, yet who appeared to them to be so beautiful.

1838–1840. Fashion in Paris.

Finery worn with premeditation.

"Well, the comme il faut women, being left alone, abandoned themselves to philosophic reflections, and from these various reflections this has been the result: a display of attire that has become a mania; universal fashions that know no laws, that stop at nothing—neither time, distance, nor prejudice—that borrow ideas from all countries, from all religions, from all opinions, and from all ages. One could learn the history of France, the history of England and geography, only by reading a fashion magazine. Hats à la Marie Stuart, à la Henri IV; head-dresses à la Mancini; bows à la Fontanges; Spanish hair-nets; Egyptian turbans,—all souvenirs are recalled, all ranks confounded, all beliefs mingled. A duchess wears bonnets à la Charlotte Corday, a Methodist wears turbans à la Juive; all one wants is to appear beautiful, no matter how."

The mania in feminine fashion.

Ideas from all countries.

Bonnets and hats of all nations.

With these ideas in her pretty head it is not to be wondered at that fashion ran riot. Yet the result, as may be judged from the fashion-plate of the period, was not altogether displeasing: not to be at a loss to satisfy the

Fashion runs riot.

1838–1840. Fashion in Paris.

ever-changing whims and caprices of their fair clients, the costumières and modistes spared no pains to invent and produce new models, with the result that during the

Novel fabrics.

ensuing years one finds a surprising number of novel fabrics and designs, many of which have survived to this day, the mere enumeration of which, however, would occupy far more space than their merit would justify. The very names by which they were then popularly known have in most instances long since been relegated to the limbo of obsolete fashion. If ever any of them make a reappearance, as in all probability they will, in the usual evolution of fashion, it will doubtless be under a new

Recurring modes.

nomenclature, for it seems a curious condition of a recurring mode that whilst a style may repeat itself, its original appellation hardly ever does so. For, as Shakespeare puts it:

> "All with one consent praise new-born gawds,
> Though they are made and moulded of things past."

Amongst the many fabrics which enjoyed considerable vogue at this period one may mention silk, which was extraordinarily popular, and was worn everywhere. Amongst

Silk moiré antique.

its many forms one notes "moiré antique," a peculiar manufacture which produced a particularly hard and ungraceful material, of which the principal qualification appears to have been that it would stand alone, so *rigid*

Watered silk.

were its folds. Watered silk was very much admired. It disappeared and reappeared several times since the 'thirties, and various descriptions of glacé silk tarlatan, a sort of stiffened muslin, were largely used for the ball-

Tarlatan.

dresses. This tarlatan enjoyed a popularity which long outlived the modes of the 'fifties. It was made in endless variety, with spangles, gold and silver spots, stars, velvet spots, etc., and for many years was almost the sole fabric

used for ball-dresses by the dressmakers, as it imparted a juvenile appearance which was very pleasing. 1838-1840. Fashion in Paris.

Sarsenet, a lighter make of silk, which was very much in demand for many years for bodices and spencers—the name still survives in the form of a ribbon—and a host of other tissues introduced by enterprising manufacturers, which had a vogue of more or less duration, according to how they took the fancy of the moment. Lace was very much worn by the élégantes, and the finest examples and workmanship commanded the most extravagant prices, prices which have maintained their level since then, for it has been realised that fine lace will never depreciate in value. We are told as an instance of this extravagance that the marriage robe of the Princesse Hélène, Duchesse d'Orléans, was made of *Point d'Alençon*, and cost thirty thousand francs. Sarsenet. Lace much worn. Extravagant marriage robe of Princesse Hélène.

In France the fashionable woman, for reasons which are difficult to follow, had also become a pronounced Anglophile, and therefore the antithesis of the preceding decade. The Frenchwoman must have change, new sensations, new ideas. She cannot exist long in one groove. It is therefore not surprising that the new style of woman should be so distinctly different from her predecessor. Instead of the romantic, sentimental, lachrymose person she has been for many years, we now find a new genre. This time the woman of fashion appears to us as the English sportswoman, lover of horses and dogs, an adept in all sports, a good rider, a good fencer, and a good shot. With all these qualities and talents in addition to the usual feminine attractions in the taste of her appearance, which she always possesses, no small wonder that the élégante of the period charms one more than perhaps any other, in spite also of the fact that she is far less feminine in the new rôle. Her life is one continual rush in search of The Parisienne a pronounced Anglophile at this period. The new genre.

1838–1840. Fashion in Paris. The continual rush in search of pleasure.

pleasure—race-meetings, pigeon-shooting, fencing-bouts, premières, receptions, scandals, and what not; no time for anything or anybody but herself from morning to night. It was a curious phase of fashion in Paris in those years, and has been delightfully rendered in caricature by Gavarni.

Longchamps in those years.

Longchamps was in its glory; the famous racecourse was on the day of a big meeting a scene of splendour and beauty such as had not been witnessed since the days of the Empire, and the drive to the course through what is now known as the Bois de Boulogne was one of the sights of the time. The roadway was always lined on either side by the populace, who could thus feast their eyes on the long procession of gorgeous equipages with their beautiful and exquisitely dressed occupants. These were the palmy days of Longchamps, for although the race-meetings still continue, the actual éclat of them gradually decreased till towards the end of the 'forties they developed into what they are to-day, ordinary cosmopolitan gatherings where the leading dressmakers send their mannequins to display their latest creations.

Palmy days of racing.

1840–1848. Fashion in Paris. Everything English the "grand chic."

It was about this period, when everything English was the "grand chic," that a new word was imported from across the Channel and added to the daily vocabulary of the smart Parisian. This word was "lion." It is scarcely necessary to explain that the term was appropriated in the social and not in the zoological signification, "lion" being the society nickname for a celebrity of the moment who is much in vogue at entertainments and receptions by reason of his having achieved a recent brilliant success or for being the hero of some stirring adventure. He is not of the same family as the smart man about town. The "lion" is the person one wants to see, the other is the person who wants to be seen—the difference is enormous. The appellation caught on at once. There were not only "lions"

The real society "lion": his attributes.

"Lions" and "lionesses."

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1840-1848. Fashion in Paris.

everywhere, but "lionesses" also, and a big stir they made. Every set had at least a score of them in order to be in the fashion. But they were not of the same category as the real "lion." Any pretty and elegant woman who was fortunate enough to possess fine diamonds, expensive lace, big horses, and a good cook, who was to be seen everywhere—at the theatres, the opera, the races, and at every function—was classed amongst the "lionesses" without any anterior formality, or any apparent qualification beyond these felicitous attributes and proclivities. Any one who wore his hair à la Henri III, a beard à la Pluton, moustaches à la Cromwell and a tie à la Colin, who, seated in a cabriolet beside a microscopic "tiger," smoked a colossal cigar, and bawled out at the top of his voice, "Bojou, mon cher—comment ça va?" and to which greeting another equally loud voice replied through a cloud of tobacco-smoke, "Ça va pas mal, et toi?" was at once recognised as an undoubted "lion," and designated as such thereafter, on what authority one knew not, nor, may it be added, did one trouble much. These social inanities continued to adorn the world of fashion in Paris until the Revolution in 1848, when they were swept away in the vortex, to be resuscitated later under a new *sobriquet* equally ridiculous; and so the whirl of idle fashion continued in the gay Capital.

Qualifications of a "lioness."

Qualifications of the new type of "lion."

The disappearance of these inanities.

The Faubourg Saint-Germain; the rival camps.

The Faubourg Saint-Germain, which, since the days of the First Empire, had always classed itself as leading Paris, if not exactly in eccentric fashion at least in aristocratic elegance, was divided at this time into two camps: "le grand et le petit Faubourg"—the demarcation between them was difficult to understand, but still it existed, somewhat as there is a distinction between provincial and Court nobility. Perhaps it was because the "petits Faubourgiens" were beginning to get into touch with the plutocrats of

1840–1848. Fashion in Paris. Plutocrats of the Chaussée d'Antin.

the Chaussée d'Antin, who gave big balls and fêtes every winter, in which the magnificence of wealth reigned supreme, while the toilettes of the women were generally fearfully exaggerated and often vulgar. There had always been a marked inclination on the part of the families of the leading bankers and agents de change to get into the Faubourg set under any conditions, and to arrive at this end every attempt was continually being made to attract the younger members of the exclusive beau monde of the "rive gauche" to their entertainments.

Fashions of Paris represented by the wealthy middle classes.

The fashions of the moment in Paris were more accurately represented by the wealthy middle classes than by the Faubourg. Still the sedate old patricians were not averse to their young folk amusing themselves in their own set, and cotillons were the order of the day in the winter, whilst in the spring and summer, garden-parties and "déjeûners dansants" were the rage for a time. At these déjeûners dansants all the aristocracy of Paris were to be seen. Those given by the Comtesse Appony were the most famous, and from all accounts they must have been wonderful scenes as there was quite a bevy of elegance and beauty. The guests were invited at half-past two in the afternoon, and the dance took place therefore in daylight. The long lines of waiting carriages, the resplendent liveries of the servants, all the wonderful spring toilettes, with their simple adornment of flowers or ribbons, in contrast to the diamonds and sapphires of the winter ball-dresses, combined to make a picture which was not easily forgotten. Immediately on entering the house each lady was presented with a bouquet of flowers. Dancing commenced punctually at the time fixed, the *valse à deux temps* being especially the rage at that time. Towards four o'clock there was an interval for "lunch" which, when the weather permitted, was served at small tables in the gardens. After this

Déjeûners dansants given by the Comtesse Appony.

Dancing in daylight.

The interval for "lunch."

dancing was resumed, and continued until nine o'clock, when the party broke up. These al-fresco entertainments were attended by all the Society leaders of the time, as, for instance, Miss Fitz William, la Princesse de la Trémouille, la Duchesse d'Istrie, Lady Canterbury, the Duchess of Sutherland, and la Duchesse d'Otrante, to quote only a few of the well-known names, so their great vogue can be easily understood. 1840–1848. Fashion in Paris.

With gay and fashionable society, and the masses in the right mood to condone and even applaud any eccentricity, it is not to be wondered at that female fashion reflected the general atmospheric gaiety, and during the next few years was witnessed in Paris a sort of repetition of the frivolities of the Directoire period. It became fashionable for smart women to give Adamless luncheon-parties in their apartments. On these occasions they attired themselves in the most gorgeous of déshabille—these luncheon-gowns being often quite chefs-d'œuvre of the dressmaker's art. After lunch cigars were usually handed round, and when these and sundry liqueurs had been enjoyed, riding-habits were donned, and the remainder of the afternoon was spent in the open air in the Bois and elsewhere; for these élégantes added physical attainments to their other attractions, and many of them were good shots and expert fencers. General atmosphere of gaiety. Adamless luncheon-parties. Afternoon in the Bois. Lady shots and fencers.

It was at this time that a sort of fashionable Bohemianism had arisen, and was every day more in evidence in the social life of Paris. In the end a state of affairs came about which has stamped this period with a peculiar verve, as is shown by the documentary evidence in the shape of caricatures in the works of the humorous artists of this time. Such a condition could only have existed in the then state of Paris life; in our days it would never be tolerated for an instant. The wild set of wealthy Bohemians included in Fashionable Bohemianism.

1840–1848. Fashion in Paris. Wild set of wealthy Bohemians.

its ranks many of the greatest names of the young French aristocracy, who did not consider it infra dig. to play pranks the accounts of which form the most astounding reading. London at the same period reflected to a certain extent this turn of mind, without, however, any of the versatility and wit displayed in the French capital, for the escapades of the English *jeunesse dorée* do not form such amusing reading as do those of their Parisian prototypes.

The *jeunesse dorée* of London reflect same turn of mind.

Foremost amongst the débonnaire crowd of boulevardiers was the son of the Marquis of Hertford, the wealthy Lord Henry Seymour, the founder of the Paris Jockey Club, whose eccentricities had captivated Paris. Nicknamed "Milord l'Arsouil" by the *gamins* of the city, he was certainly one of the most popular figures of that time, and no carnival or festivity was complete without him. Although his pranks and practical jokes appear to us now to have often been of a questionable character, they were always taken in good part by the crowd, who got to look out for his four horses, postillions, outriders, and buglers as they would for Royalty, or as if they were provided for their special entertainment.

Lord Henry Seymour: "Milord l'Arsouil."

No description of the fashions of these times would be complete without some reference to the carnivals and masquerades which were quite amongst the features of the time of Louis Philippe. Carnivals as they were then understood have quite died out now, or if they are revived, it is in so modified a form as scarcely to bear any resemblance to the originals. A short account of the famous "Descente de la Courtille" may therefore be of interest. La Courtille was originally the garden of the nuns who supplied vegetables to the Hospital Saint-Germain. Its site is now covered by Belleville, one of the roughest and most ill-famed faubourgs of Paris, but in the time of Louis Philippe it was quite a rural spot, and much favoured by romantic

Carnivals and masquerades.

La Courtille. The site of La Courtille now Belleville.

1846

lovers on account of its umbrageous walks, and by wedding parties and festive gatherings, which were drawn there by its many open-air restaurants. Its attractions inspired several poets, one of whom, Racot de Grandval, wrote : 1840–1848. Fashion in Paris.

" Dans ces lieux fortunés où régne l'allégresse
Les vins les plus exquis font naître la tendresse,
Et, mélant les plaisirs on entend dans les airs,
Les sons harmonieux des bachiques concerts.
Là, mille amants, couchés aux pieds de leur maîtresses,
Trouvent un prompt remède à l'ardeur qui les presse—
Ici le désirable et charmant appétit
À l'autel de Comus par la main les conduit—
C'est le charmant reduit qu'on nomme la Courtille ;
Lieu fatale à l'honneur de mainte et mainte fille."

Carnivals were at their height of popularity about 1840, but certainly the most curious of all was the " Descente." It took place on Ash Wednesday (Mercredi des Cendres), after the night restaurants and dancing-rooms were closed. At about six o'clock in the morning there descended from the heights of Belleville a big crowd of masqueraders in all sorts and conditions of costumes—some fairly good, others faded and ragged—and these matutinal merrymakers congregated in the neighbourhood of the Grand Saint-Martin, one of the most famous of the ball-rooms in the locality. On each side of the street vehicles of all sorts, from the elegant coupé to the humble fiacre, were filled with spectators, mostly masked and in fancy costume, who threw amongst the crowd sweets, flowers, and sometimes money. As the mob on foot started moving to the accompaniment of wild choruses, it increased until it reached the front of the " Vendanges de Bourgogne," the famous restaurant of the district. It was here that the monde élégant assembled to witness the remarkable spectacle, and amongst the crowd one saw the smartest society women, who would come direct from aristocratic cotillons in the Faubourg Saint-Germain to see the procession pass, for The " Descente." The " Vendanges de Bourgogne. Smart society women witness the procession.

1840-1848. Fashion in Paris.

the "Descente" was one of the annual attractions of the fashionable world, which on this occasion did not mind rubbing shoulders with the *οἱ πολλοί*, and the contrast of the smart gowns of the élégantes with the tawdry costumes of the revellers was not one of the least remarkable of the sights of the occasion.

Lord Henry Seymour throws hot louis amongst the crowd.

It was at the restaurant just named that Lord Henry Seymour and his friends used to rendezvous—his somewhat far-fetched pleasantry of throwing hot louis amongst the crowd being a never-ending source of amusement. After passing the "Vendanges de Bourgogne" the procession slowly made its way through the "Faubourg du Temple," and so on to the Boulevards, where it gradually dispersed. The "Descente" was an astonishing spectacle from all accounts, and many writers have expatiated on it, but it has long ceased to take place.

La mode in Paris.

Fashion in Paris did not vary in any marked degree, except in minor details, during the next few years; the tendency, however, was still noticeably towards a modified

Coal-scuttle bonnets.

revival of the "Hoop." Coal-scuttle bonnets were still very much in favour, in fact were worn in more or less diversified and becoming shapes for twenty consecutive years. One notes as a special feature of the prevailing mode some very pretty gowns in striped silk and other materials, with gracefully shaped shoulders, large "bishop" sleeves, and silk pélisses and capes, or gauze scarves or

Flounces.

shawls. Flounces were still much en evidence, but they were larger, and had lost all the grotesque appearance of the 1826 period; where flounces were introduced, the skirt,

Smart costumes in silk.

which in the smart costume was usually silk, was cut very full, and fell in soft heavy folds, in shape somewhat recalling the Charles I period immortalised in the portraits of Vandyck and other great painters of his epoch. By 1840 the change was sufficiently advanced to have become the

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1840–1848. Fashion in Paris.

accepted mode. The style still further recalls the period just referred to, more especially with reference to the ringlets falling over the ears, which were very graceful, though the effect was somewhat marred for the first few years by the incongruous method of arranging the hair at the back of the head in an ungainly knot. By 1841, however, this had disappeared, and no exception can possibly be taken to the succeeding mode, which has all the charms of youthful simplicity and attractiveness.

Incongruous method of dressing the hair.

CHAPTER X

1840–1850. Fashion in London.

THE years from 1840 to 1848 offer nothing of striking interest either in social or fashionable life in England which is worthy of note. It was a period of

The modes.

pleasantly prim costumes in which large skirts, reminding one of the old "Hoop" without its stiffness, bright coloured shawls, stripes, checks, flounces, and quaint but becoming poke bonnets reigned supreme. Gauzes, Siam crêpes, mousseline, Baréges, tulles, were fashionable materials for evening dresses, whilst for walking and négligés, plaids of every dimension, checked foulards, taffetas chinois, in stripes or waves, and pèlerines, either with a tone of the same colour or of two contrasting colours, were much worn. Mantillas and "visites" of chinchilla were considered very elegant, and there were also manteaux, châtelaines, pardessus, in styles named the Garrick, the Greek mantle, the Infanta, the Spanish, and the Moorish, all of which were in fashion for a time. Coloured velvet bonnets lined with silk of a brighter hue added a pleasing note to the general effect of what was not an unbecoming mode. Ostrich-feathers were much worn, but merely the tips, which in consequence fetched fancy prices. Hats of satin and velvet and historical coiffures of the Marie Stuart period once more made their appearance. Caps were much in vogue—the Pompadour, Geneviève, Marguerite, and Fanchon styles being especially favourites; whilst pretty little head-dresses made of gold ribbon and black or coloured lace were very attractive and amongst the features of these years.

1848

1848

1840–1850. Fashion in London.

Later on towards the end of the 'forties, we find Barèges dresses ornamented with graduated ribbon and velvet with charming effect, and ball-dresses of crêpe, lisse, or tarlatan, decorated with small leaves, blades of asparagus, sprigs of barberry, or branches of currants formed of velvet bound with gold cord. These dresses were the more fashionable on account of their being equally attractive by daylight or candlelight. Tarlatan embroidered in light designs executed in fancy straw was one of the artistic novelties. In the country or by the seaside it was the fashion to wear straw bonnets simply trimmed with a black velvet band around the crown, whilst the edges were left loose, being finished off with a straw beading; the strings, which were made of ribbon velvet, were attached to the inside of the poke, and a branch of flowers or a ribbon rosette sufficed to hide where they joined the straw.

The Revolution in France of 1848. The Revolution in France of 1848 naturally had its effect on fashion, which took some time to recover itself, and the effect of it was consequently felt in London as well. Lyons, famous for its silks, had through the general labour upheaval ceased to work for some time past, and therefore the élégantes of both countries had, of necessity, to be content with plain stuffs. The inevitable reaction soon came, however, with the change of government, and with it a return to the more elaborate and expensive modes. Watered silk or Pekin skirts became de rigueur, when velvet canezons or spencers were worn, whilst to give straw bonnets a more staid appearance they were generally trimmed with rows of velvet and large bunches of velvet flowers placed very low on each side.

The modes after the Revolution.

A pleasing change was made during the winter by the introduction of white felt for these bonnets, also ornamented with velvet and flowers. Quite a charming fashion in 1848 was a return to open-work and embroidered stockings

1840–1850. Fashion in Paris.

and extremely low cut shoes. Turn-down collars, after the style of the modern "Peter Pan" kind, were very much worn at this time as a becoming finish to the costume, by the younger folk.

The revival of a Court at the Tuileries.

Brilliant fashions.

With the revival of a Court at the Tuileries, and gay Drawing Rooms and official receptions in Paris, fashion at the end of the 'forties became more brilliant than ever, and this note was reflected, as might be expected, in London. Ball-dresses were naturally the first to come under its sway; they were more diaphanous in texture, and more fully embroidered than before. Flowers were worn on them in profusion, and gold and silver net, all of which made up a very attractive coup d'œil. Feathers, flowers, and diamonds played the principal part in the head-dresses. Sable and ermine were much worn for evening cloaks. Everything that recalled the great Napoleon was the rage for the moment in the gay world in Paris, so much so that

A return to the Greek tunic hinted at.

a return to the Greek tunic was even hinted at, which led many in London to believe that the First Empire styles would return with the new régime, and also to hope that they would, as the tunic admittedly imparts a graceful and becoming line to the figure. This, however, was not to be the case, as we shall see later on, when a mode the very antithesis of anything graceful and becoming was destined to mar for many years any progress towards symmetry and elegance.

1851. The Great Exhibition in London.

The year 1851 was remarkable in London; it was the year of the Great Exhibition, and the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park was the scene of gaiety and splendour such as had never before been witnessed in England. The Exhibition was opened on May 1 by Queen Victoria in person, and was closed on October 11 following, and its success was so great that it proved the forerunner of many other exhibitions all over the world. As was only

1849

1850

natural, this year of gaiety was to be followed by several dull and uneventful Seasons, in which fashion was in a state of transition, hesitating, as it were, between a return to a more simple mode or the adoption of the "Hoop" which was foreshadowed by the deliberations of the French autocrats of fashion. 1851. Fashion in London. The "Hoop foreshadowed.

The year 1851 was marked by the attempted introduction into England of the American idea of a dress fanatic obsessed on the subject of a rational costume for women. No description of this period would be complete without some mention of the notorious lady who had the courage to attempt to bring about such a drastic innovation in a country which was not hers by birth, and where she was only known in connection with her failure to bring the women of the United States into line with her views. Attempted introduction of the rational costume into England.

We are told that the first man who carried an umbrella was mobbed through the streets of London. The first lady who assumed "pantalettes" became at once the object of vulgar curiosity and idle gossip. The lady in question was a Mrs. Bloomer,* the editress of an American publication, and a person with strong views of her own as to feminine attire, which she had come across from America especially to put forward, realising doubtless how true is the adage that none can be a prophet in his own country. Her proposed revolution in female costume was not, however, taken more seriously in England than over in the Mrs. Bloomer. Proposed revolution in female costume.

* Amelia Jenks Bloomer, 1818–1894, American dress-reformer, and woman's rights advocate, was born at Homer, New York, on May 27, 1818. After her marriage in 1840 she established a periodical called "The Lily," which had some success, and also edited the "Western Home Journal." In 1849 she took up the idea—previously originated by Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Miller—of a reform in women's dress, and this wearing of a short skirt and loose trousers gathered round the ankles. The name of "bloomers" gradually became popularly attached to any divided skirt, and knickerbocker dress for women. Until her death, on December 30, 1894, Mrs. Bloomer took a prominent part in the Temperance campaign, and in that for Woman's Suffrage.

1851. Fashion in London.

States, but for a short period Mrs. Bloomer achieved quite a notoriety, whilst curiously enough the actual article still exists as a female garment, and is known by her name.

The movement she endeavoured to initiate excited so much controversy and amusement at the time that it will be of interest to give some account of it. It was known also as the "Camilia" costume, and the main features which distinguished it, we learn from "Sartam's Magazine," a popular monthly periodical published at Philadelphia, were short skirts reaching just below the knees, and long pantalettes. Its adoption was advocated on the ground of comfort, health, and unimpeded locomotion. All matters of detail, proportion of parts, materials, trimmings, etc., were left to individual taste. There was already, said Sartam, as great a variety in Philadelphia in the new costume as in the fashions imported from London or Paris. The reason, it continued, was evident. "A lady who is independent enough to disregard the attention such innovations necessarily attract, will also be independent enough to vary them to suit her fancy. Some of the dresses are therefore very elegant and graceful, while others are clumsy and gaudy."

The "Camilia" costume of Mrs. Bloomer.

Short skirts and long pantalettes.

Efforts of adherents of Mrs. Bloomer to bring about the new fashion.

Meanwhile Mrs. Bloomer's adherents used their utmost endeavours to bring the English public to their way of thinking, and to this end, in London, Dublin, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, ladies, singly and in pairs, appeared publicly in the new costume; but the wearers were not sufficiently nerved to withstand for any length of time the persecuting curiosity aroused by the strange garb, although fourteen ladies so attired, and accompanied by as many gentlemen, calmly paraded the streets of Philadelphia without being molested. A prominent American journal remarked that, had Queen Victoria and her Court donned Bloomer attire, the example would have been spread fast enough. This might perhaps have been the case, on the same principle

American journal on Bloomer costume.

MRS. BLOOMER

1851

as the farthingale became the mode in Queen Elizabeth's time, but there was no such incentive. 1851. Fashion in London.

Lectures were given in London and Dublin on and in the new costume; but at one which was announced as being given for the special benefit of the people of Finsbury, the conduct of the audience was so boisterous as to intimidate the lady lecturer, who deemed it prudent not to appear. It was ascertained afterwards that there was not only no fear of her not receiving a fair hearing, but that the majority of the audience was determined she should not have been annoyed. The following letter appeared in the "Daily News" next day: "SIR,—May I be allowed in your columns to ask why the British public is so horrified at the idea of women dressing in trousers, seeing that they have for many years tolerated a number of men from the North of the Tweed in wearing petticoats, and shockingly short petticoats too? AMELIA BLOOMER." Lecture on Bloomer costume in Finsbury. Letter in "Daily News" on the Bloomer costume.

The agitation of Bloomerism continued with unabated vigour. A committee of ladies was formed, and lectures were given at Miss Kelly's Soho Theatre, the Linwood Gallery in Leicester Square, and in other places. A ball was announced at the Hanover Square Rooms at which all ladies were requested to wear Bloomer costume. The lecture at the Soho Theatre, says a London paper of the time, was crowded, and an attempt at interruption by some hilarious individuals was immediately suppressed. The lady lecturer who appeared in the costume was accompanied on to the platform by several other "Bloomers," as they were jocosely termed by the crowd. Coming straight to the point, however, the lecturer told the audience that the movement was not dictated by any freak of vanity, nor was it started from any personal motives; it was purely from the standpoint of public morality that it was undertaken. The American women who had taken Continued agitation in Bloomerism. Lecture in Soho on Bloomerism.

1851. Fashion in London. Bloomerism.

the lead in this reform were those who had taken the lead in another of the greatest reforms of the age—the question of American slavery (loud cheers).

The lady was in the midst of her disquisition, when eight more young ladies entered most oddly attired. The audience found it impossible to maintain its composure, and burst forth into a genuine shout of laughter, a proceeding which seemed for a moment to daunt the fair lecturer. Another lady in semi-Bloomer costume now came in front of the stage, and begged a fair hearing for the American lady.

The lecturer continued, "in their investigations the women of America found that they had one despot in the way, one that refused to be questioned either by morality, religion, or law; that tyrant was known to the world by the name of Fashion; that tyrant the women of America had determined to bring before the bar of public opinion on three special charges. First, that nature had been violated, its rules and life endangered; second, that in consequence of its requirements a vast amount of money had been expended which might have been diverted to higher and holier purposes; and third, that by encumbering women it incapacitated them from rendering services to society worthy of their high destiny. These doubtless were strong charges, and for them she hoped the tyrant Fashion would receive either banishment or transportation for life."

Despotism of Fashion.

The lecturer then went fully into the familiar question of stays, and their deteriorating effect upon the human frame. She implored the women of England to follow the example of America, and no longer countenance such an atrocious system. She confessed that in many parts of the country the Bloomer costume had been received with much disfavour, but so had paletots when they were first

Stays and their deteriorating effect.

1851

1851

suggested for ladies' wear. The lecturer concluded by thanking her audience for the treatment she had received, and the audience responded by giving her three cheers. 1851. Fashion in London.

The daily and weekly papers all gave the question their attention. The "Medical Times" said: "An essential in the Bloomerian creed is no corsets. That banner we nail to the mast, and so far heartily give our support. For many a weary year have medical men been preaching a crusade against stays, and in vain endeavoured to stem the tide of fashion which sets so strongly in favour of them. In spite, however, of all that has been written and said upon the subject, and in spite of the sacrifices of the hundreds who have fallen victims to this odious fashion, the public have obstinately turned a deaf ear to our remonstrances. The tide may be about to turn. Mrs. Bloomer may cause it to run the other way, and we hope for her success. As regards the other part of the dress, the idea of females having trousers may be scouted as ridiculous, but as nine out of ten do happen to wear them, the fact of their being an inch or two longer can make no difference, and it becomes a mere question of common sense whether a costume which clothes the body well and yet allows free play to every part, is not a more rational habit than a pinched-up, wasp-like waist, and a cumbersome mass of horse-hair, hoops, furbelows, and flounces, sweeping the mud in the streets, and doing part of the duty of Mr. Cochrane's orderlies, whilst they also evoke the anathemas of the gentlemen, as when following ladies downstairs they tread on their dresses, trip, swear, and apologise." Views of daily and weekly papers on Bloomer fashions. The "Medical Times" on the Bloomer creed.

"Punch" devoted numbers to what he entitled the "Bloomer Convulsion," but whilst good-humouredly quizzing it pictorially, Mr. Punch waxed very indignant in the letterpress, as the following verses prove: "Punch" on the Bloomer costume.

1851. Fashion in London. "Punch" on Bloomerism.

MRS. GRUNDY ON BLOOMERISM.

"Oity-toity: don't tell me about the nasty stupid fashion.
Stuff and nonsense: the idea's enough to put one in a passion.
I'd allow no such high jinkses if I was the creature's parent,
Bloomers, are they?—forward misses! I'd sooner Bloomer 'em, I warrant.
I've no patience nor forbearance with 'em—scornin' them as bore 'em.
What? They can't dress like their mothers was content to dress afore 'em,
Wearing what-d'ye-call-'ems—gracious, brass itself ain't half so brazen.
Why, they must look more audacious than that what's-'is-name, Amazon.
Ha! they'd smoke tobacco next, and take their thimblefuls of brandy,
Bringing shame upon their sex by aping of the Jack-a-Dandy.
Yes: and then you'll have them shortly showing of their bold bare faces,
Prancing all so pert and portly in their Derbies and their races.
Oh! when once they have begun, there's no saying where they'll be stopping.
Aye, and like as not you'll see, if you've a Bloomer for your daughter,
Her ladyship so fine and free a-pulling matches on the water:
Sitting in a potter's tap, a-talking politics and jawing,
Or else a-reading 'Punch' mayhap, and hee-hee-hawing and haw-hawing.
I can't abear such flighty ways—I can't abide such flaunty tastes.
And so they must leave off their stays, to show their dainty shapes and waists,
To set their ankles off indeed, they wear short trousers with a trimming;
I'd not have my feet filagreed, for ever so, like these young women.
No, you won't see me, I'll be bound, dressed half and half as a young feller,
I'll stick to my old shawl and gownd, my pattens, and my umbereller."

Madame Tussaud and the Bloomer costume.

Many tawdry coloured prints with dismal attempts at verse attached to them were sold by street-hawkers, and Madame Tussaud added a group of figures in the Bloomer costume to her exhibition; but as was inevitable, the much-talked-of revolution in female attire was killed eventually by ridicule and satire. It had been started at least fifty years too soon, as one now sees. A sort of obituary notice of it which appeared in one of the daily papers may be of interest in concluding this account of Bloomerism. "The disadvantages of the dress," they said, "are its novelty—for we seldom like a fashion to which we are entirely unaccustomed—and the exposure which it involves of the foot, the shape of which in this country is so frequently distorted by wearing tight shoes of a different

1852

1851. Fashion in London. Opinions on the Bloomer costume.

shape from the foot. The short dress is objectionable from another point of view, because, as short petticoats diminish the apparent height of the person, none but those who possess tall and elegant figures will look well in this costume: and appearance is generally suffered to prevail over utility in consequence. If to the Bloomer costume had been added the long under-dress of the Greek women, and had the trousers been as full as those worn by the Turkish and East India women, the general effect of the dress would have been much more elegant, although perhaps less useful. Setting aside all considerations of fashion, as we always do in looking at the fashions which are gone by, it was impossible for any person to deny that the Bloomer costume was by far the most elegant, the most modish, and the most convenient." Women in England, however, who wished to retain some appearance of femininity decided otherwise, and, judging from the unlovely picture of Mrs. Bloomer which is here given, it is probable that most people in our days will endorse their verdict on the so-called "rational costume."

CHAPTER XI

1851.
Fashion in Paris.
The boundary line between elegance and disfigurement.

WE now approach a period which marks a boundary line as it were between elegance and disfigurement in the history of feminine attire. For some years there had been a noticeable disposition towards making a drastic change in the fashionable dress. It had been confidently anticipated that the advent of the Second Empire would bring about a return to the delightful costumes of the Consulate, but this anticipation was not destined to be realised, Dame Fashion had another surprise in store.

The first two years of the Second Empire.

For the first two years of the new régime, woman's dress remained practically in statu quo: that is so far as one can apply the description to anything feminine. At any rate, the modifications did not amount to anything in the nature of a complete revolution such as was on the tapis, and there was a slight tendency towards a definite return to the bodices and the straight waists of the eighteenth century rather than to the classical of the First Empire.

1854.
The edict of the dressmakers.

When, in 1854, there came the edict of the fashionable dressmakers that the skirts which hitherto had been worn wider round the hem were, if anything, to be increased in circumference and stiffened, the inauguration was made

The ugliest mode ever seen comes in.

of the ugliest mode the world has probably ever seen. The suggestion, first of all, of the new style was to make the wearer look more corpulent, or rather to leaven the outward appearance of the plump and the thin; and secondly,

1852

1854.

Fashion in Paris.

Flounces.

that, the ordinary skirt being too limp to support the flounces then the fashion, it became necessary to add some internal stiffening to hold them out. Highly starched linen petticoats were tried for a time, but without achieving the result aimed at; then the dressmakers remembered the material known as "crinoline," * which had been used during the 'thirties for keeping the "manches à gigot" in position. Once started, it was discovered that merely stiffening the skirt with the horse-hair cloth still did not give it the necessary resistance, so an inventive individual evolved a combination of hoops of steel and steel springs which transformed the skirts into veritable cages, almost identical in appearance, save for a few modifications, with that of our old friend the farthingale of Queen Elizabeth or the hoop of the Louis XVI period. The crinoline was therefore but the revival of an ancient mode under a new name.

"Crinoline" the material used.

Hoops of steel and steel springs, veritable cages.

The crinoline, the farthingale of Queen Elizabeth.

Women of fashion the world over, whilst realising the ridicule the new fashion would bring upon them, nevertheless decided to adopt it, and having done so, stuck bravely to their convictions with a force of character and a philosophic indifference to the quips and satire of the moralists and doctors, and the low jokes of music-hall artistes that quite surprises one nowadays. They continued to wear the crinoline in spite of all this with genuine feminine perversity, and it is difficult to believe that any woman in her senses and with an atom of pride in her appearance could have thought that the hideous arrangement, when in the zenith of its ugliness, could by any stretch of the imagination be considered becoming or attractive. Whole volumes might be written on the subject of this extraordinary innovation. It was the source of endless dis-

Indifference of women to satire. They continue to wear crinolines

* This material derived its name of crinoline from the words, crin, horse-hair, and lin, flax-cloth.

1854. Fashion in Paris. Antagonism in France between the crinolinists and the anti-crinolinists.

cussion, and eventually brought into existence two distinct factions in the world of fashion. In France, especially, war was waged between the two parties with undisguised bitterness, the anti-crinolinists even going so far as strongly to advise the adopters of the mode to stick to it, as it gave them a good chance of disguising their bad figures at any rate.

1854-1860. Madame de Castiglione appears at the Tuileries without a crinoline.

One of the most prominent opponents of the crinoline in Paris was the beautiful Madame de Castiglione, who always appeared at the State balls at the Tuileries in clinging drapery, in open disregard of the fashion of stiffened flounces set by the Empress, who, whilst not actually a wearer of the hooped skirt, had always had a penchant for puffings and paddings and frills and innumerable petticoats. In this connection it may be of interest to relate that the Empress, who was, as we have already stated, looked upon as a leader of European fashion, decreed that white tarlatan should be the evening mode at balls, where the steels of the crinolines would have rendered dancing or even locomotion so impossible. The women expanded their skirts by wearing a dozen or more starched flounced petticoats at once. When it is mentioned that, for a double skirt of three flounces, fifteen yards of material thirty-six inches wide were required, one can form some idea of the extravagance of the new mode.

The Empress Eugénie and white tarlatan

A dozen flounced petticoats worn at once.

Extravagance of the mode.

Here is an extract from a journal of fashion: "A few of the most admired ball-dresses prepared for the present Season may be described: one just made is of blue tulle, light as vapour. The skirt, which is entirely bouillonée and soufflée, is separated by rouleaux of blue satin, and rows of blonde. Six barbes of rich blonde descend over the tunic: some are fastened at the lower ends by bouquets of roses without foliage, and the other three are fixed by rows of ribbon. The corsage and sleeves are bouillonée,

Description of a ball-dress.

1853

1854

1854

and a light scarf of blue tulle, in the style of the écharpe Impératrice, is fixed by bouquets of roses." 1854–1860. Fashion in Paris.

A big industry gradually developed in connection with the manufacture of steel springs for crinolines, and one can in a measure grasp the extraordinary proportions this vogue attained when one learns that in the report of the French Jury at the London Exhibition of 1854 the annual production of steel crinoline springs for the world was 4,200,000 kilogrammes, valued at 10,500,000 francs, out of which huge amount France alone was responsible for 2,400,000 kilogrammes, and England for 1,200,000 kilogrammes. Big industry develops for making crinoline steels. Report of Jury at London International Exhibition, 1854.

The steel hoop or cage did not, however, enjoy a prolonged period of favour. Its manifest unfitness was soon too obvious to be disregarded. It was too hideously rigid, and moreover, by reason of its unresisting rigidity, was often the cause of involuntary indecency on the part of the wearer. It was therefore abandoned in favour of whalebone after a time, and subsequently both were superseded by a number of heavily starched linen petticoats for outdoor wear, which were found to answer the purpose equally well. The steel hoop superseded by starched petticoats.

The fashions for the other portions of the remarkable attire of the women of this period were no less fantastic and unbecoming. Very large upstanding collarettes to which various high-sounding names were given, such as Louis XVI, Anne of Austria, Mousquetaires, etc. Then there were endless varieties of short jackets, Zouave, Turkish, Greek, all more or less hideous and in bad taste, and many descriptions of short overcoats known in those days as reefers or pea-jackets, somewhat similar to those sailors wear. These were made in English cloth or poplin or alpaca, ornamented with gaudy buttons. Waistcoats for women were very fashionable at this time, and were Collarettes. Jackets. Short overcoats. Poplin, alpaca.

1854–1860. Fashion in Paris.

made with more or less elaborate designs, and with jewelled buttons. Long cloth coats in dark colours were now introduced and caught on instantly, as, apart from their being la mode, it was realised how useful they were for rough use on all occasions, also for hiding skirts which were slightly soiled.

Another innovation should be recorded, which also marks this period, namely, the opening of large shops where ready-made costumes could be purchased. This, the forerunner of the huge emporiums which have since arisen all over the world, is of particular interest when one considers the dimensions the wholesale trade has attained in the sale of feminine attire since those pioneer days of the 'fifties. Russian blouses, Garibaldi shirts, in a variety of colours and materials, with tawdry trimmings were now in fashion. There were also mantles of smooth-faced cloth à l'Anglaise, with heavily braided frogs, and trimmed with so-called astrachan, and curiously shaped opera-cloaks with picturesque names.

Garibaldi shirts.

At the same time, to continue the almost endless list of finery, there were fichus à la Marie Antoinette, and à la Charlotte Corday, Indian Cashmere shawls, and other Eastern fabrics for the daytime; and Algerian burnous for theatre wraps on cold evenings. Another article which was also in vogue was the veil—that known as à l'Impératrice in particular. It was usually of a texture only partially hiding the face, and had a heavy border of lace. Amongst the very few relics of this ungraceful period, the veil still survives in various forms, but in a more elegant and improved style.

Fichus.

Algerian burnous.

Veils with lace borders.

Large straw hats were very popular, with white or black ostrich-feathers: these were certainly more tasteful than the ridiculous little bonnets and "pork-pie" hats also worn. What was considered an almost indispensable

Straw hats and ostrich-feathers.

adjunct to a smart woman's toilette in fine weather was a parasol, and to such an extent was the craze carried that it would be difficult to give a description of a tithe of the extravagant varieties even in apparently so simple an object. The folding stick was the latest novelty: the handles, to be equally in the fashion, had to be of costly and gorgeous descriptions. The materials of which the sunshade was made varied from moiré antique to lace, silk, or cambric, and even hand-painted designs, according to the occasion on which it was to be used. It was towards the end of the 'fifties that an intelligent umbrella-maker conceived the idea of combining the sunshade and umbrella into one article which would serve the double purpose of protection against rain and sun. He launched them on the world under the name of "en-tout-cas," and by this appellation they are still known.

1854–1860. Fashion in Paris.

Parasols with folding sticks.

Fashionable women now began to discard the old-fashioned shoe for high-laced boots, which had been just introduced. These boots, which were very inelegant, though not more so than the rest of the toilette, were usually made of kid, with triangular patent-leather toe-caps: they had somewhat high heels, and were long enough to reach well up the calf of the leg, the shape of which they were supposed to show off to much advantage. As the boots were black, and white stockings were usually worn, the ungainliness was if anything heightened, as a glance at any of the cartoons of the period proves. Shoes when worn had big bows or wide mohair laces. Circular pocket-handkerchiefs, elaborately embroidered by hand, were very much favoured. Small fans were considered indispensable with the ball-dress at this period, and one still sees many really beautiful and artistic specimens which were carried by the belles of those days. They were frequently quite objets d'art in their way, so exquisitely

High-laced boots with triangular toe-caps.

Black boots and white stockings.

Shoes with big bows.

Circular pocket-handkerchiefs.

Small fans exquisitely painted.

1854–1860. Fashion in Paris.

were they painted by artists of talent in imitation of celebrated paintings of the French school—Watteau, Boucher, Lancret, etc. Nor must we forget the gold- and silver-mounted scent-bottles, and card-cases and purses in ivory or mother-of-pearl, all of which were deemed indispensable for the wardrobe of a woman of fashion at that period. Jewellery shared the eccentricity of the rest of the mode, and there are many records of such absurdities as "aquarium" ear-rings, tiny globes of crystal filled with water in which fish were swimming, and immensely long gold chains hanging from the neck.

Scent-bottles.

Mother-of-pearl purses, etc.

"Aquarium" ear-rings.

Worth discovered by the Princesse de Metternich Sandor.

The Princesse Pauline de Metternich Sandor, whose style and bewildering variety of dresses attracted so much attention at the Court of the Second Empire, is credited with having discovered "an Englishman named Worth" who established himself in Paris in 1858, on the eve of a revolution in the sphere of tailors and milliners. Frédéric Loliée, in his "Les Femmes du Seconde Empire," says Madame de Metternich adopted Worth herself, and forced him on her friends, and that, thanks to her, he became the autocrat of taste, and all the fashionable women who wished to be in the first flight of elegance flocked to his establishment.

Worth synonymous with fashion.

Since then the name of Worth has become synonymous with fashion the world over, and it is probably not too much to state that the Rue de la Paix itself has become the more famous by reason of the existence in it of his establishment. It is of interest to note that, given the entourage and encouragement, it is not outside the capabilities of an Englishman to dictate fashion in Paris itself.

1855

1856

1857

CHAPTER XII

1854–1860. Fashion in London. The Crimean War.

ON January 27, 1854, war was declared between England, France, and Russia, and for the next two years the stirring events in the Crimea were the talk of the world. Curiously enough, however, in spite of the gravity of the situation, fashion in both England and France, instead of becoming modified and subdued, suddenly blazed forth into a style which for sheer ugliness was destined never to be equalled, the chief feature of which was the crinoline.

Fashion in England and France.

We have already related whilst describing the fashion in Paris at this period how the hideous garment made its appearance, so it is unnecessary to redescribe it as it was when adopted in England—the styles being practically identical. If anything, the English fashion was the more ugly and unbecoming, since it had not even the " chic " of the French dressmakers to impart to it any semblance of beauty or elegance. In England it was a skirt hung over a steel cage pure and simple, and was worn by women who, under the most normal conditions, had no natural aptitude for dress: not that the crinoline could ever have been a thing of beauty, yet contemporary illustrations showing Englishwomen wearing it make it appear, as compared with the French drawings, even more hideous.

Apart from the crinoline and the unlovely fashions which, as we have seen, accompanied it, there was little of novelty in the world of fashion during the next few years. England took the terrible events of the Crimean War so much to heart, that it is astonishing that any new mode,

The Crimean War.

1854–1860. least of all the crinoline, should have been allowed to make its appearance during the two years of the war. Whilst femininity was giving full rein to its love of change in fashion it was saved from wholesale contempt by the wonderful labours of Florence Nightingale at Scutari, which form one of the brightest records in English history. The year following the conclusion of the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny broke out, and for yet another year England was involved in a struggle which brought still further mourning into the nation. Fashion, however, whether in black or colour, still pursued its ordinary tenor of everlasting change. For, whether in peace or war, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, Dame Fashion remains inexorable in her demands from her votaries.

Florence Nightingale.

The Indian Mutiny.

Inexorable fashion.

1858-1860. Fashion in Paris. Worth, the man dressmaker.

It was about this time, as we have seen, that the name of the Englishman, Worth, was attracting so much notice in Paris as a man dressmaker, and his fame had now reached England, and was beginning to be talked about, not only in the world of fashion, but in those outer circles which are not as a rule interested in the doings of the couturières of the Rue de la Paix. That there was any insular pride in the knowledge that the man who was creating his reputation in Paris was an Englishman seems somewhat doubtful, as an occupation such as dressmaking, being more usually associated with women's work, was not likely to appeal to the imagination of the virile Englishman. Still it is not surprising that the prowess of this Worth should be deemed worthy of more than passing notice, and we find in "All the Year Round," in an article entitled "The Man-milliner" * many facts probably novel to the reader. We are told that "the easy Duchesses of the Regency at last selected their waiting-maids from amongst their

Article in "All the Year Round."

* Why the term man "milliner" should have been used is somewhat puzzling, as Worth's labours were confined entirely to dressmaking.

1858

1858

lackeys. Their footmen laced their bodices and fastened the bows of their cravats. But," continued the writer of the article, "would you believe that in the latter half of the nineteenth century there are bearded milliners, man milliners, authentic men, men like Zouaves, who, with their solid fingers, take the exact dimensions of the highest titled women in Paris, robe them, unrobe them, and make them turn backward and forward before them like the women figures in hairdressers' shops?

1858–1860.

Bearded milliners.

"You surely know the Rue de la Paix, the Street of Peace, so called because it commemorates war under the form of a column—there resides somewhere in it an Englishman who enjoys considerably greater popularity in the world of furbelows than any London preacher whatsoever. It must be avowed that this Anglais has created a novel art—the art of squeezing in a woman at the waist with a precision hitherto unknown. He possesses the inspiration of handling the scissors, and the genius of sloping out. He knows to a thread the exact point where the stuff ought to fit tight, and where it ought to fit loosely. At first sight he distinguishes in the figure of a lady what ought to be displayed and what concealed. Destiny set him from all eternity to discover the law of crinoline and the curve of the petticoat. In other respects a perfect gentleman, always fresh shaved, always frizzled. Black coat, white cravat, and batiste shirt-cuffs fastened at the wrists with golden buttons, he officiates with all the gravity of a diplomatist who holds the fate of the world locked up in a drawer of his brain. When he tries a dress on one of the living dolls of the Chaussée d'Antin, it is with profound attention that he touches, pricks, and sounds it, marking with chalk the difficult fold. From time to time he draws back, in order to judge better of his work from a distance; he looks through his hand, closed into the shape of an eyeglass, and

Fashion in Paris.

Worth the Anglo-French dressmaker in the Rue de la Paix.

1858–1860. Fashion in Paris. Worth and his methods.

resumes with inspired fingers the modelling of the drapery on the person of the patient. Sometimes he plants a flower here, and ties a bow of ribbon at its side, to test the general harmony of the toilette. Meanwhile, the modern Eve, in process of formation, resigned and motionless, silently allows her moulder to accomplish his creation. At last, when he has handled the taffety like clay, and arranged it according to his beau-idéal, he goes and takes his place, with his head thrown back, on a sofa at the further end of the room, whence he commands the manœuvre with a wand of office.

Autocratic treatment of clients.

"'To the right, madame.' The client performs a quarter of a revolution.

"'To the left.' The patient turns in the opposite direction.

"'In front.' Madame faces the artist.

"'Behind.' She turns her back.

"When all is over, he dismisses her with a lordly gesture: 'That will do, madame.'

"The Paris élégantes, marvelling at the delightful ways of their milliner in pantaloons, came to the conclusion that a man who made a robe so well ought finally to put it in place himself, and ought to stamp it with the mark of his lion's claw. Consequently, whenever there is a ball at Court, or at the Hôtel de Ville, or an evening party of ceremony at the Palais Royal or the Luxembourg, at about ten o'clock at night you will see a long line of carriages drawn up before the house of the foreign ladies' tailor, with their melancholy coachmen buried in their wraps. Their mistresses mount the staircase of the Temple de la Toilette; as they enter, they each receive a ticket in the order of their arrival, and are shown into a waiting-room. As they can only appear one by one in the presence of the pontiff of the skirt, the last comers have sometimes to wait a long

Interesting procedure on the night of a ball.

1858

1858

1859

1860

1858–1860. Fashion in Paris. The ante-chamber at Worth's.

while. By a delicate attention, the master of the mansion does his best to solace as far as possible the fatigue of the ante-chamber. A buffet liberally supplied offers the consolation of meats and pastry. The ethereal petites maîtresses of the Paris Salons lay in a stock of strength for the polka, by eating paté de foie gras at discretion, and washing it down with Malmsey Madeira. Thus refreshed at the expense of the establishment, they intrepidly confront the operations of the toilet. He looks, he inspects, gives a finishing touch, sticks in a pin, arranges a flower, and Madame has realised the prototype of elegance. The master gets rid of them one after the other, turning them off hand rapidly.

Light refreshments.

Finishing touches.

Worth's caprices.

"Nevertheless, like all great artists, this son of Albion has his caprices. He will clothe and criticise, doubtless, any woman, but he prefers ample women. He believes that those do most honour to his talent, putting it more plainly in evidence. For them he reserves all the attentions and all the ingenious flatteries of his profession. As to beauties who are reduced to the meagre volume which is rigorously indispensable to escape being a ghost, he consents to dress them, certainly—but without enthusiasm, solely as a duty of conscience.

"There is not the slightest intention here to cast disfavour on the talent of the English artist, and still less on his personal character: he has a profession which he exercises. He is engaged in a commercial undertaking, and he endeavours to attract customers: there is no harm in that, for it makes all the difference to him between prosperity and ruin. But what are we to think of the customers, the aristocracy of the Exchange, virtuous, but sufficiently forgetful of themselves and their husbands to discuss with a man milliner at night the perilous problem of the height of a dress?"

CHAPTER XIII

1860.
Fashion in Paris.
Bevy of lovely women at the Court of the Tuileries.
The Comtesse de Castiglione.

THE Court of the Tuileries during the Second Empire was, as is well known, quite remarkable for the beauty of its women and for everything that was delightful in the shape of entertainments. Foremost amongst the bevy of loveliness was the Comtesse de Castiglione, who was the acknowledged queen of beauty in Parisian society. She was the wife of an Italian nobleman, and has been spoken of as one of the most beautiful women of her time. Her first appearance at one of the balls at the Tuileries had created quite a sensation. Every one, it is said, seemed as though magnetised with admiration, and the Emperor himself advanced and invited her to dance. Never had such a glorious creature been seen before at the Tuileries, nor had any woman had such a success at her début. From that moment she led fashionable life in Paris, and wherever it was rumoured she was likely to be seen, people would wait in crowds to catch a glimpse of her. In spite, however, of leading the fashion, she did so with ideas of her own which were quite antagonistic to the dictates of the autocrats of the Rue de la Paix. The crinoline she would have none of, preferring the clinging draperies cut in simple lines which displayed so well the elegant contour of her shapely form, costumes with evening bodices (cut so daringly low as often to shock the susceptibilities of the Court) of a style many years ahead of what was then the fashion, but nevertheless the more attractive by reason of its audacity.

1861

1860. Fashions in Paris. Fancy-dress balls the rage at this time.

Fancy-dress balls, a souvenir of the time of Napoleon I, were the rage during the Second Empire, especially in official society. One reads glowing accounts of the gorgeous scenes at these balls. Those given by the Duc de Morny and Monsieur and Madame Drouyn de Lhuy at the Foreign Office were particularly famous, and invitations were eagerly sought after. On February 17, 1856, the minister and his wife gave a ball which has become historic even amongst the many great festivities of the Second Empire. On this occasion the lovely Comtesse de Castiglione appeared as the Queen of Hearts; the superb Baronne de Rilly, daughter of the Marquis du Hallay, as a magicienne; that seductive American, Madame Pilié, mother-in-law of Monsieur de Chasseloup-Laubar, senator and minister, as the Marquise de Pompadour; and the beautiful Princesse Mathilde as a beggar-woman, dressed in rags, and with her face made up with a mask so as to render her quite unrecognisable and old and ugly.

The famous ball given by the Duc de Morny.

Some costumes at the ball.

"These charming memories," exclaims Monsieur de Beaumont-Vassy in his "Salons de Paris et la Société Parisienne sous Napoléon III," "if one cared to linger over them, would fill a thick volume. Even without referring to the historical and mythological quadrilles, those of the nations, the constellations, the Watteau shepherds and shepherdesses were quite as brilliant as the famous bee quadrille danced at the Tuileries, whilst the funny and clever ideas of the various gentlemen of the Foreign Office can never be forgotten."

The Emperor and Empress go to the balls incognito.

Everybody in society went, and large sums were spent on the costumes. The Emperor and the Empress always took great pleasure in going incognito, wearing dominoes in order to avoid recognition, to the costume balls at the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, or to those at the Ministère d'État. They would change their dominoes several times

1860. Fashion in Paris. Changing dominoes during the evening.

during the evening, and it was all the more easy for them to make themselves really incognito by reason of the arrangement of the apartments which communicated with those of the Grand Chamberlain at the Tuileries. There was only a door to open, a curtain to push aside, and the Emperor found himself transported into the apartments of the Ministère d'État, and in the midst of the ball. Whilst it was comparatively easy for the Empress to disguise her graceful form, the Emperor, on the other hand, was easily recognised, no matter what trouble he took to avoid it. His walk revealed him even more than his voice.

The Emperor and Empress disguise themselves.

The tyranny of fancy dress.

During the first years after the marriage of the Emperor, the tyranny of fancy dress extended itself to the most serious of men, even to the very ministers themselves, and it was often remarked how great was usually the dissimilarity of character between the wearers and the costumes. The adoption of Venetian mantles and collars in various colours of satin, which can be attached to the collar of the coat without hiding the dress suit, had come to the assistance of political men, whose gravity was thus not compromised.

Paris in the early 'sixties.

Paris in the early 'sixties was the centre of wit and talent as well as beauty and fashion, and in this connection it is interesting to compare the memoirs of two observant writers of the time. Greville was not, apparently, impressed with the social gaiety of Paris. He writes thus of a great evening party with two petites pièces and music at the Duc de Morny's: "I went there with Lady Cowley. The crowd was so great that I saw nothing whatever of the spectacle, but was pretty well amused, for I met some old acquaintances, made some new ones, and was presented to some of the celebrities of the day. I was much struck with the ugliness * of the women, and the extreme

Social gaiety of Paris. Greville's views in his memoirs.

* In spite of the presence of such acknowledged beauties as have already been mentioned.

1861

recherche of their costumes. Nature has done nothing for them; their modistes all that is possible." 1860. Fashion in Paris.

Gronow, who was much in Paris during these years, dives deeper into the subject. "Fashion," he says, "has such wonderful power over the French mind that it can actually transform the body so as to suit the exigency of the moment. In former days the French type of woman-kind was une petite femme, mignonne et brue; in the whole of Society, thirty or forty years ago, one could scarcely have numbered half a dozen tall women. They were looked upon as anomalies, and ridiculed not infrequently under such very uncomplimentary appellations as 'chameaux gendarmes,' 'asperges,' and so on. Now that it is the fashion to be tall and commanding, one sees dozens of gigantic women every day that one goes out, with heels inside as well as outside their boots—perhaps even stilts under those long sweeping petticoats; but there it is. Frenchwomen used to have dark hair; blondes were not generally admired, and they therefore tried by every possible means to darken their hair; but now, since the Empress has made fair hair à la mode, all the women must be blondes, and what with gold powder and light wigs they do manage to succeed. As to complexions, a dark one is unknown; roses and lilies abound on every cheek."

Social gaiety in Paris according to Gronow.

Altered type of Parisiennes.

Tall women.

High heels.

Dark women not in fashion.

It was not because the Empress Eugénie was the wife of Napoleon III that she set the fashion, even to those who were not invited to Court, and who therefore sneered at her entourage; nor was it on account of her physical attractions, for, although undeniably good-looking, she was considerably older than many of the ladies of her Court, and certainly not handsomer; but it was from all accounts her wonderful reputation for "chic" which induced most women of the fashionable world, and some

1860–1870. The Empress Eugénie and the fashion.

1860–1870. Fashion in Paris.

of the demi-monde, to find out what the Empress was wearing before adopting a new toilette or a fresh coiffure.

Good taste and elegance of the Empress.

It was a common subject of conversation that the good taste and elegance displayed by the Empress developed itself only in the more mature years of her life, for as the beautiful Mademoiselle de Montijo her dress was always very dowdy. The charm of the personality of the Empress was felt on all sides, and hence it can be averred that the women of that period have left behind imperishable souvenirs, remarkable in many respects in the annals of femininity. The mere mention of such names as Princesse Mathilde, la Comtesse Walewsky, la Comtesse de Pourtalés, la Comtesse le Hon, la Princesse de Metternich, sufficiently recall the

Splendour of the last Court of France.

splendour of that last Court of France, and the distinction of the palace of the Tuileries.

1862

1863

1864

CHAPTER XIV

IN 1862 London's second great International Exhibition was held in a building erected close to the Horticultural Gardens in Kensington, and attracted if anything more people to the Metropolis than the previous one. The idea had caught on, and there were talks of a series of exhibitions in the various capitals of Europe during future years. At this moment the crinoline, with all its hideous paraphernalia, was at the height of its absurdity, and the scenes witnessed in London amongst the crowds of visitors attracted by the Exhibition have been described as surpassing in pure extravagance of ugliness anything that had been seen before in the world of woman's dress. Nor was there any sign at this period of any growing sense of humour on the part of misguided woman with regard to her appearance, and the ludicrous effect it produced. The strange fascination the steel cage exercised over the feminine mind is one of those psychological mysteries which can never be satisfactorily explained. But to the mere man and to the artist it is utterly incomprehensible how any woman, endowed by nature with natural physical charms, can, at the mere dictates of a coterie of dressmakers, willfully disfigure herself. One feels indeed inclined, when endeavouring to penetrate the intricacies of the feminine mind, to echo the French saying: "Où la coquetterie va-t-elle se nicher!"

1862.
Fashion in London.
The International Exhibition.
The crinoline.

In 1865 London society was beginning to be interested

1865. Fashion in London. George du Maurier's work in "Punch."

by the appearance in "Punch" of drawings by a new and hitherto unknown artist, George du Maurier. The drawings displayed a refinement and originality which were very welcome after the stereotyped and coarse humour to which one had become accustomed. Moreover, they portrayed a class of society which had hitherto been only delineated more or less in caricature. It was evident that du Maurier was imbued with a deep admiration for the natural charm and elegance of the English gentlewoman of the beau monde, whilst having a corresponding aversion to her antithesis, the vulgar snob and parvenue. This fascination for his subject exercised so remarkable an effect on the artist, that it ended by his evolving a type of English beauty which brought him fame in the 'seventies, and continued without interruption throughout his career.

A new type of English beauty.

The "du Maurier" girl was as popular in those years as the "Gibson" girl was recently. The type is still too well remembered to need description. Du Maurier's idea was, as he himself expressed it, "fair as a goddess, and divinely tall," and he carried out this fantasy in all his drawings, whenever he had occasion to portray an English lady, to such an extent, that it came to be generally accepted as the conception of what she really should look like. There is an innate stamp of breeding about his ladies that is very convincing, and makes them quite the best depictments we have of the smart society woman of London in the 'seventies and 'eighties. Always dressed in the latest fashion, but never over-dressed, she seems to personify all that is feminine and delightful and up to date, without a trace of ostentation or vulgarity. Whether represented in the ball-room or in the home, she appeals to one with irresistible charm. The contrast between her and her French prototype is all in her favour, for she was at least natural, and not always playing to the gallery.

The du Maurier type of English beauty.

If we accept du Maurier's drawings therefore as realities, and not ideals, of the society woman, we have the following delineation as a remembrance of those times. She is tall, fair, and charming; serious without a trace of coquetry, frank without pretension. There is no frippery in her attire: the small black vest with the skirt fastened at the waist shows off a fine figure and healthy form, whilst the elegance of her whole attire at all times is redolent of good-breeding. No fashion-plates of those years convey any idea of this particular type so well as a glance through the back numbers of "Punch," for there you have not merely fashion, but character as well. In this connection it may be of interest to draw attention to the remarkable deterioration in this respect of the modern fashion-plate. Take, for instance, a plate of the 'forties, and you have not only a design for a costume, but you have also an interesting illustration of the lady of the period, which in itself is of ethnological value. In the modern plate, which is never so well drawn or reproduced, the figures are simply dressed-up dummies without any character in the drawing.

1865. Fashion in London.

Fashion-plates of the 'forties compared with those of to-day.

Fashion in London was then represented by a very exclusive aristocracy, and those intimately connected with it, or by those who thought they were, and not, as now, by those who have the money to go to Paris and purchase what they are told they ought to get. Plutocracy could not then give admittance to that sacred inner ring towards which so many longing glances were cast, for to get into society, money was not the "Open, Sesame." Monsieur Auguste Langel, in his work "L'Angleterre politique et sociale," gives his opinion that a social position may be more easily and rapidly obtained by mere wealth in Paris than in London.

Exclusive aristocracy of those days.

Social position in London not to be obtained by mere wealth.

Times have altered considerably since he wrote those

1866–1870. Fashion in London. "Society" a generic term.

lines, and the word "society" is fast becoming a mere generic term in these democratic days, where the mere accident of birth does not count for anything, and where being the bearer of an old name does not always ensure advantages. Fashion, however, as represented by society, stood for almost everything that was bright and amusing in those dull days of the 'sixties. During the "season," which was in the summer months only, the rendezvous of the élite was Hyde Park between the hours of five and seven. Rotten Row was then crowded with equestrians, whilst the "mile," the stretch of roadway between Hyde Park Corner and Knightsbridge Barracks, was then blocked with magnificent equipages, and this show of horseflesh alone was always spoken of as one of the sights of Europe.

London during the "season."

In the Row.

The strip of gravelled walk between the Row and the "mile" was the favoured point of assembly for those who were not driving or riding, and the numerous chairs were always occupied by a throng which resembled a big family, as every one seemed to know every one else. The defile of carriages with their smartly dressed occupants represented all the wealth and beauty of the London season, but although fashion was there, it was evidently not such an exhibition of style as Englishwomen in their artlessness were wont to believe.

Monsieur Taine's impressions of London fashion.

Monsieur Taine, in his interesting "Notes sur l'Angleterre" in the late 'sixties, thus gives his impressions of the scene: "From five to seven, review of toilettes; beauty and finery abound. Colours are outrageously crude, and the figures ungraceful. Crinolines too hooped, and badly hooped, in lumps, or in geometrical cones; green flounces, dresses with gold embroidery, flowered dresses, a profusion of light gauze, masses of hair, curled and hanging loose, crowned with small hats covered with flowers; the hat

is over-trimmed, the hair too shiny and sticks severely on the temples. The mantle or the cloak falls shapelessly over the hips, the skirt is absurdly puffed out, and the whole effect is bad—badly chosen, badly made, badly arranged, badly put on and the loud colouring simply shrieks out." 1866-1870. Fashion in London. Candid criticism.

Not altogether a flattering description, as will be admitted, though it conveys a very good idea of the fashionable throng during the season in the Row; but, par contre, this observant Frenchman makes up for his cynicism later on, when, after giving his impressions of the plain and therefore, to his mind, uninteresting people, he goes on to say: "Others go to the very extreme of beauty. One sees there, faces of angels, eyes of palest blue full of depth, colour of the face like that of a child, and a divine smile. One morning, about ten o'clock, near Hyde Park Corner, I was struck completely dumb with admiration in front of two young ladies, one of about sixteen, the other perhaps eighteen years of age, in dresses of white tulle and a cloud of muslin; tall, slim, agile, with figures as perfect as their faces, with incomparable complexions, reminding one of those wonderful flowers one sees in Chinese exhibitions, the white of the lily and the orchid, and above all a gaiety and innocence and superabundance of animal spirits and laughter together with the light step of a bird." This sententious description of the pretty English girls in the late 'sixties tallies, however, with the impressions of most foreigners when visiting London for the first time. Admiration of English girls.

Apart from the Park in the afternoon, there was not much in the shape of out-of-door amusement except the inevitable shopping in the morning, and that must have been somewhat curtailed, as the large emporiums and stores had not then come into existence in London. Moreover, ladies in those days had to be very careful of overstepping Outdoor amusements.

1866–1870. Fashion in London.

the bounds of propriety, and seldom went out unless accompanied by a maid. To be seen driving in a hansom was almost regarded as evidence of "fastness."

Formal visiting.

In the afternoon there was formal visiting to be made previous to going into the Park, and these visits were the means of disseminating all the petty gossip and "on dits" of the town.

Hurlingham.

Hurlingham * was the fashionable afternoon lounge on certain days in the week, but the club was yet in its infancy.

Crystal Palace.

The Crystal Palace was too far, so it was only occasionally, on fireworks nights, that the "smart set" endured "so long a drive" as to Sydenham.

Botanical Gardens.

There were occasional evening fêtes during the summer at the Botanical Gardens in Regent's Park, which in those days was the most select of the al-fresco resorts during the season, as one could only get in by invitation from a member. It was here that one saw the smartest gowns, and the latest so-called Paris fashions, though how near they must have been to the original, the impressions of Monsieur Taine give us some idea.

Theatres.

Theatre-going had not developed to anything like the extent it has now reached, and as there were no restaurants worthy of the name, people seldom dined in public.

Private entertaining.

It followed therefore that there was a good deal of private entertaining.

"Kettledrums."

The nearest approach in London to the old Paris Salons were the "kettledrums" or five o'clock teas, when a hostess met her coterie on far more intimate terms than at the formal evening receptions.

London Salons.

But it is doubtful whether a comparison ought to be made, as the London afternoon Salons were usually shallow and unimportant reunions at which vapid society twaddle formed the greater part of the conversation. The great London hostesses of the 'sixties, 'seventies, and early 'eighties

* It was opened as a pigeon-shooting club in 1868—polo was started in 1874.

have left imperishable memoirs of the balls and receptions at which hospitality was lavished to an extent unknown in these more practical days, when entertaining is usually done by a caterer at so much per head. It was, we read, quite a usual thing in those days for a hostess not to know all her guests, and vice versa, and this theme was the subject of several of du Maurier's most delightful drawings. 1866–1870. Fashion in London.

Fashionable society in London was then, as it is now, very different from what is understood to represent the grand monde in Paris. In London young unmarried women form as a rule a very considerable portion of a fashionable set, whilst in Paris it is quite the contrary, only married women being permitted the licence which is allowed to an unmarried girl in England. The French girl leads a very monotonous existence, and, except in certain Anglicised sets, is always tied to her mother's apron-strings till she gets married, when she makes her début into society, and also not infrequently endeavours to make up for lost time. The feminine portion of the grand monde in Paris consists principally of married women; therefore, when speaking of fashion and its votaries, in the ville lumière, one refers to female beauty of more mature years and experience than it is understood in England, where girlhood and young womanhood everywhere reign supreme, and to no small extent lead the fashion so well. Young unmarried women in London society.

A few years previously a certain Plimpton of New York invented a four-wheeled skate working on rubber springs, as a sort of toy. The novelty caught on immediately, but it was not long before it was realised that there was more in the idea than at first appeared, and when used on a prepared surface or floor, it was found that a good imitation of ice-skating could be obtained. This "toy" was the forerunner of the roller-skate, and the rinks which were 1870. Rinking. The Plimpton roller-skate.

1878. The rink girl.

the furore of the 'seventies in London and Paris. The rink girl was one of the results of the craze, and her smart rinking costume and trim figure helped not a little to add to the fascination of the new pastime. The rage of rinking lasted for several years, when it died a natural death—its devotees had got tired of it.

1865

1866

CHAPTER XV

IN 1865 the principal papers of Paris thus described the dress worn by a well-known society beauty and leader of fashion at a Court ball at the Tuileries: "A white dress, composed of alternate bands of tulle and satin over a petticoat of tulle with silver stripes and garlands of roses, sewn with little stars and spots of black velvet; a very long train of black velvet trimmed with satin; a belt of emeralds and diamonds; an Empire coiffure powdered with gold-dust; and a velvet ribbon round the hair holding a diamond aigrette; no crinoline." The significance of the last two words cannot be over-rated, for they sounded the death-knell of the crinoline:

1865. Fashion in Paris.

No crinoline.

In the meanwhile, whilst waiting for the auspicious moment, a craze for colour had come over the scene which accentuated still further the hideous taste of the period, and which made one seriously wonder whether for a time women had not taken leave of their senses, for this is the only charitable inference one can draw after an inspection of the fashion-plates of these years. There are doubtless many people still living who can remember the awful patterns and colours of the 'sixties: the plaids, the checks, the stripes, and the magentas, the solferinos, the puces, the violets, the bright blues and greens, which were seen in merinos, Irish poplins, and English alpacas, all so shockingly crude as to be positively nauseating to one nowadays; but little did that matter in that lamentable decade, when good taste was generally non-existent, and when apparently

1865-1866. Fashion in Paris. Good taste non-existent.

nearly every woman was striving to outdo her neighbour, not only in the loudness of her dress, but by her wild extravagance in the feverish desire to attract attention at any cost.

One must not omit at this juncture to record another and still further barbarism which also marks this period indelibly; this was hair-dyeing. Yellow or red hair now became the rage. It is said that this mode arose from the desire of the smart women in Paris to copy the Empress as closely as possible. The difficulty in this case was in getting anywhere near the wonderful shade of her hair, which has been described as neither blonde nor red nor auburn, the secret of which, if there was any secret at all, she alone possessed; and this perplexity accounted for the many disastrous results.

Hair-dyeing. Yellow or red hair the rage.

Every one, however, whose natural colour was brown or black and who desired to be considered in the fashion, had to proceed to her coiffeur and leave herself in his hands. This dyeing was, of course, an expensive process, but the result quite justified the means in the opinion of the élégantes, although they frequently had to run the gauntlet of the jeers and laughter of the crowds in the streets, to whom the transformation was as often apparent as it was diverting, for at that time hair-dyes and bleaches were not always successful. The chemists had not yet discovered the secret of making natural tints, with the result that not infrequently the coiffure of the up-to-date lady of fashion, after a visit to her hairdresser, presented quite unaccepted shades in the range of capillary colouring. There was a peculiar tone of deep yellow, which was particularly crude and horrible to look at if not successfully produced.

Laughter of crowds in streets.

Hair-dyes not always successful.

Deep yellow hair.

The Grand Prix at Longchamps.

The day of the Grand Prix at Longchamps was then, as it is still, the big final event of the Paris season, and thousands were attracted to the famous racecourse who

1867

knew they had not the remotest chance of seeing any of the racing, so great would be the crowd on that particular day. Still, all who could get away from the stifling air of the city on this particular Sunday would make their way to the Porte Maillot, if only on the chance of catching a glimpse of some of the celebrities of the day—perhaps the Emperor and the Empress, if one was lucky; if not, some of the fashionable beauties and well-known demi-mondaines.

1865–1866. Fashion in Paris.

Crowds waiting to see celebrities pass.

The endless defile of carriages of every possible description with their loads of well-dressed and interesting people, from the splendid four-in-hand to the ordinary sapin or cab, was a source of never-failing interest to the less fortunate individuals who considered themselves as forming part of the procession, by crowding at every corner and criticising loudly and with much good humour and ready wit all who attracted their notice as they slowly drove past. The grandes demi-mondaines, those fair and frivolous charmers who were so much en evidence in the world of fashion during this epoch, were always the cynosures and to a certain extent the favourites of the public. One heard quite a chorus of recognition when such well-known beauties as Léonide Leblanc, Anna Deslions, Cora Pearl "la belle Anglaise," Marguerite Bellanger, and Marie la Polkeuse, to name only a few out of the score of pampered Aspasias whose names were household words in the world of pleasure in Paris in the 'sixties, rolled by in their magnificent equipages.

Endless depth of carriages.

Good-humoured crowds.

The grandes demi-mondaines.

Well-known beauties.

This day was also the great day of the year for fashions as well as beauty, and the lawn behind the grand stand was always crowded between the races with the smartest and most original toilettes of the season. The great dressmakers inaugurated at this period the custom of sending their most attractive mannequins dressed in the very latest creations in the hope of making a sensation

The day of the year's fashions.

Attractive mannequins.

1865–1866. Fashion in Paris.

with a hat or a gown, and attracting the notice of a society plutocrat. It was here also that the fashions of the immediate future were introduced, either to catch on or to be ignored, for there could be no medias res. In short, the Grand Prix at Longchamps in those palmy days of the Second Empire was the great day of the year.

Great Exhibition of 1867.

Paris during the Great Exhibition of 1867 was more animated than ever: not a cloud showed itself on the horizon to mar the serenity and general prosperity of the nation.

The remark made by the Duc de Persigny.

In fact, we are told, it was remarked by the Duc de Persigny that "with the Napoleonic dynasty, Europe will enjoy peace for at least a hundred years." How little in

Gay times in Paris during this year.

those gay times, when the boulevards were crowded all day with visitors and foreigners in search of amusement, and the city at night was ablaze with illumination and echoing with music, did Parisians dream that in so short a while all was to be changed into grief and mourning, that all these scenes of light-heartedness and gaiety would disappear, and that the Geneva Cross and Army Hospital garb would replace all these dainty toilettes; that fashion was to be veiled in crape.

1866-1870.

Final disappearance of the crinoline.

The latter half of the 'sixties saw the final disappearance of the crinoline. There had been many attempts made to modify it sufficiently to justify its being retained just a little longer, but to no avail; it was doomed to pass, only for the reason that it had already been in vogue for too protracted a period. Ten years is considerably longer than the average life of a whimsical fad, and the astonishing part of it was that it had lasted so long. But what was to take its place? This became an acute question. At balls

Louis XV and Louis XVI and Watteau costumes introduced for a time.

and big receptions Louis XV and Louis XVI and Watteau costumes had been introduced and had divided the honours for some little time during this indeterminate period, but it was very evident that these revivals had not come to

1868

1869

1869

stay. Already there were indications that they were only, as it were, stop-gaps, and that the next mode would certainly be something quite original and novel. 1866–1870. Fashion in Paris.

Nor were expectations deceived, as will be seen, for the fiat went forth in undisguised terms from the autocrats of the Rue de la Paix that there was to be a return to close-fitting gowns, and the graceful outline of the human form—in other words, a tardy return to common sense. There was nothing to do therefore but to bow to the inevitable, or to the dictates of fashion, whichever one preferred to call it, and the next few years saw changes which, if not quite so incongruous as those in the period from which we have just emerged, were none the less inelegant and unattractive, as will be seen. The new mode was, however, destined to be abruptly ended in France by the terrible period of the Great War, so the indescribable cachet which is imparted by the Parisienne, naturally, to any style, however inelegant, is quite absent from all fashion for some time. This absence of French inspiration no doubt explains more or less satisfactorily the reason for the incongruity of many of the styles in the early 'seventies. Return to close-fitting gowns. Many inelegant modes. The commencement of the Great War.

La Mode, therefore, during the following years did not come from France, for the essential leaders of fashion had other thoughts with which to occupy their minds; they were now utilising their time in making lint bandages and tending the wounded in the hospitals, or discussing plans for alleviating the distress of bereaved families. Many changes had taken place during the dreadful months of the war, and light-hearted Paris was now but a city of mourning. There is, however, a term to all things, human grief included, and it was realised that weeping would not mend matters or bring back beloved ones. So at length Paris emerged tear-stained and dishevelled from her ruins, with the determina- The years following the war. Many changes. The Parisienne in a new and more tender rôle. 1870-1873.

1870–1873. Fashion in Paris.

tion to pull herself together again. But the wild folly and carnality of the dissolute times of the Second Empire were now succeeded by a period which, by comparison, bordered on austerity and puritanism, so great was the contrast. The gay Parisienne, transformed for the time being into a very subdued and modest personage by the remembrance of the roar of the Prussian guns, now appeared in a more real and feminine rôle than we knew her in all the past years. Not that she was ever otherwise than intensely human, but the atmospheric influence of Paris during peaceful and insouciant times, combined with the general immoral influence of the Court, so eclipsed the good women, that one wondered if any really existed in Paris, since one seldom heard but of the escapades of the frivolous dames du monde, or the doings of the demi-mondaines. All was now changed, and the Parisienne proved herself a true helpmate, God's comforter, and camarade during those months of anxiety after the war and the Commune.

The grief-stricken Parisienne.

Society functions and entertainments in aid of the wounded.

Bazaars, society concerts, theatrical performances, for the benefit of the wounded and their families succeeded one another rapidly, and at these Madame Thiers, Madame de McMahon, the Princess Troubetskoi, and many other grandes dames always gave their assistance. At all these it was noticeable how simplicity in dress was the order of the day. All colours, eccentricity of style, and jewellery, were conspicuous by their absence. There was a sudden check on all things connected with luxury or outward show, and one now saw quiet, distinguished elegance which was in marked contrast to the vulgar ostentation of previous years. It was said that the very demi-mondaines also adopted the most subdued and unnoticeable garb, so impressed were they by the altered conditions.

Simplicity in dress.

Time, the great healer.

As time, the great healer, went on, and season succeeded season, Fashion gradually began to venture forth and to

1870

1871

1872

1872

show herself once more, although for a long while mourning was worn. By degrees the new fashions were given out with less sombre colours, though the acute souvenirs of the war were still kept alive, somewhat foolishly and unnecessarily, it was thought, by the Alsatian bows which many young women wore on their heads. Simplicity of line replaced the crinoline, with a tendency to tightness about the knees, which somewhat vaguely recalled the Japanese kimono. This tightness, which was but slightly marked in the early styles of the mode, became more accentuated later on. The new fashion was not unbecoming, and looked very graceful when worn in black velvet or satin.

1870–1873. Fashion in Paris. New fashions less sombre in colour.

1871–1873.

CHAPTER XVI

1873. Fashion in Paris.

IN 1873 one finds a change which is a sure indication of a return to lighter moods and less serious thoughts.

Noticeable change in mood of Parisians.

This change is noticeable more especially in lingerie and odds and ends: delicate laces, dainty frills, filmy cambrics, are now more and more in demand, whilst light tussore silks, tulles, nets, foulards in écru tints, were largely

Big magasins crowded.

sold in the big magasins, which were crowded again with shoppers eager to purchase the latest novelties. Great developments were taking place in the manufacturing world, in the textile branches especially, and a new impetus seems to have been given to life in the important industrial centres, where the factories were continually evolving new

New tissues.

tissues; alpacas, mohairs, cloth of all descriptions, were in constant and ever-increasing demand.

Waterproof coat for ladies now introduced.

A novelty in the shape of a waterproof coat for ladies made its appearance about this time, and in spite of its inelegance it caught on so well in popular favour, that no woman, however smart or young or old, disdained to wear so useful a garment in wet weather. Embroidery and brocade also came into vogue again, but the most noticeable of the changes from the mournful to the buoyant was shown in the wearing of ornamentation on the costumes in the form of decorated buttons, buckles, and belts in

1873–1875. Jewellery.

gold, silver, oxydised silver, and steel, and jewellery of the most massive description.

Jet in fashion.

Jet, which had not been in fashion since 1820, now took the fancy of the élégantes, and soon became the rage,

1873

1874

1875

remaining in favour for several years. Every one wore it to such an extent that the demand soon exceeded the supply, and imitation jet, made of glass, was largely imported from Venice. Fantastic stories have been told of the huge fortunes made out of this glorified coal in those years of its extraordinary vogue. It was worn more particularly in conjunction with a black or white fichu, and presented a very rich and becoming effect. Lace sleeves à la Louis XVI appear in many of the dresses, intermingled with rich embroidery or "brocatelle." The high ruffles, embellished with gold and silver or steel beads, which were frequently worn on ball-dresses, formed an effective frame to the head, which was not unpleasing.

1873–1875. Fashion in Paris.

Fortunes made out of jet.

High ruffles.

About this period there was what might be called "a green year," as everything had a tendency to this colour. Many new shades were introduced by the textile manufacturers, such as, for instance, verdigris, frog-green, bottle-green, canary-green, and sage-green. The majority of these colours did not, however, "take" with the public at that time, though they are still in existence. Tight-fitting corsets were generally worn now, and gave the figure the necessary line of the particular fashion of the dress.

"A green year."

Kid gloves were a noticeable characteristic of 1875, and appear to have suddenly jumped into favour, possibly because there had been some attempts made to curtail the wearing of them. At any rate they were more in vogue in 1875 than in any previous year. Long gloves with eighteen buttons, elbow gloves, short gloves of soft kid in various shades, were so much in demand that special shops opened where gloves were made to measure. This was considered a novelty in itself and for a time enjoyed a considerable vogue.

1875-1877. Kid gloves come into favour.

Another article de luxe which attracted much notice in 1875, and which gained much favour with the élégantes

Large fans.

1875–1877. Fashion in Paris. Large fans.

for a brief period, was the very large fan. It was often so huge that it was popularly known in ball-rooms as a fire-screen. One sees drawings of them which almost give the impression of caricatures, so absurd are their dimensions. Like other eccentricities of a season, they soon were discarded, but not before they had afforded endless amusement.

Charles IX shoes.

In 1875 footwear for ladies became noticeably neater and more elegant. A new shape in shoes, called the Charles IX, is particularly an improvement on its predecessors. It was made of what was called a soft glacé kid, and was long and narrow in shape. The toe was rather pinched, but not very pointed, the heel somewhat high, and it was adorned with a large bow in the front. There were also walking-boots with cloth tops to match the costumes; these were extremely fashionable.

Walking-boots.

Bewildering variety of millinery.

Millinery, as might be expected, followed the changes in the general mode with unerring decision, and the variety is so bewildering that it is difficult to give even a brief list of the names of the shapes especially in favour in one year alone. One can, however, en passant, mention the "sailor," the "shepherd," the "bersaglière," the "Fra Diavolo," and the "Orpheus." Most of these are still worn, but, with the exception of the "sailor," under different names. There were also amongst the more elaborate and expensive constructions Marie Stuart bonnets in silk or crêpe de chine, with jet ornaments or tufts of black feathers, and Michael Angelo and Rubens hats.

Hair-dressing.

Hair was still worn high with curls and undulations over the forehead, or with chignons à l'Anglaise. There was also another somewhat favourite mode à la Marguerite in "Faust," with the hair very simply arranged in front, with two long plaits hanging down the back. This style was supposed to give a juvenile appearance, and was therefore

1876

1877

1875–1877. Fashion in Paris.

more often adopted by women no longer in their première jeunesse. One must not omit to mention the prevailing custom in these years of wearing false hair. It was a recrudescence to the fashion of the beginning of the century, and an important industry gradually arose in connection with it. Trade statistics tell us that in France, in 1871 alone, 51,816 kilogrammes of human hair were sold, 85,959 in 1872, and 102,900 in 1873. We have no figures for subsequent years, but the total must have considerably increased considering the fashion. Marseilles was the principal dépôt and port of entry for the trade in human hair. More than 40,000 kilogrammes' weight was imported annually. As the weight of hair in an ordinary chignon did not exceed 100 grs., the quantity imported annually would be sufficient for 180,000 of these head-dresses. There was a celebrated house in Paris which did not sell less than 15,000 chignons a year at prices ranging from 12 to 70 francs each, but there were some costing as much as 250 francs.

False hair.

The trade in human hair.

Weight of a chignon.

The annual sale of chignons.

The hair came practically from all over the world, though the various nationalities had different values. The French provinces which furnished the most were Brittany and Auvergne. Cutters went round to the different villages and fairs to collect it in exchange for shawls, dress material, or toilet articles. They would also pay cash at the rate of about 5 francs the kilo. Their arrival at the several market centres always took place at the same time of the year. They had no need to advertise their coming, in fact they had no sooner taken up their quarters than their flocks gathered around them, willing and eager to be shorn. And all they had to do was to reap their harvest and conclude their bargains as speedily as possible. The young girl who desired to sell her head of hair got up on to a cask, and, undoing her coiffure, let it fall over her shoulders. Then a lot of amiable bargaining took place between her

Buying hair in the villages.

The bargaining with the peasant-girls.

1875–1877. Fashion in Paris.

parents and the marchand. The deal concluded, the cutting part did not occupy many seconds, and both parties were satisfied. The women did not, however, submit to actual denudation of the head, but reserved a small portion of the front, which, by clever arrangement, was afterwards so disposed as in a great measure to conceal the ravages of the scissors. The actual operation was managed with extreme rapidity, and as soon as the hair was cut off, it was tied in a wisp, weighed, and the bargain concluded.

The trade in hair from abroad.

A great deal of hair was sent annually from Italy, and more particularly Sicily and Naples. Red and golden hair, which came principally from Scotland, were the most costly. The number of chignons exported from France to England in 1875 was 16,820, with sufficient hair to make up another 11,000. The United States came next on the list. It may be of interest to mention a fact that will upset a popular fallacy: hospitals do not supply the hair used for wig or chignon making. No hair cut after death is of any use to the wig-maker or coiffeur. In other words, it must be live hair, otherwise it is brittle and cannot be curled and adapted into different shapes. Another curious fact is that masculine hair has no value whatever, and is useless for even making mattresses.

Upsetting a popular fallacy.

Opening of the new Opera House in Paris.

In 1876 the new Opera House in Paris was opened, and the ceremony naturally attracted all that represented rank, beauty, and fashion in the Capital. Fashion had not yet undergone any very marked change; it was still in a transient condition. It remained en princesse for evening robes, but one finds in the walking-dresses many crude colours—blues and reds in juxtaposition, and violent checks and stripes—which were very hurtful to the eyes. Otherwise the long plain sleeves with lace falling on the hands were not unpleasing.

Princesse robes.

1878

1878

1877. Fashion in Paris.

The expected change came in 1877, and one notices a very marked difference in the styles both of the day and evening costumes. The princesse shape had almost disappeared in evening gowns, and dresses were often laced all the way up the back, and were overdecorated with bows, lace frills, and flowers. Short gloves were worn, and heavy bracelets and necklaces with lockets by way of jewellery. Small fans were also carried. The coiffure, however, was still worn high on top of the head, and à l'Anglaise; and for walking-costumes the colours were less crude.

Short gloves.

Small fans.

1878. The Great Exhibition.

The following year was that of the Great Exhibition, and Paris was crowded to a then undreamed-of extent. It was a matter of amazement to Europe how France had managed to pull herself together so rapidly as to emerge financially triumphant from the ruins of 1871. The wonderful recuperative power of the French nation was again demonstrated in this wonderful Exhibition, and all the world and his wife were attracted to it: the seven years since the war had in verity been well employed. Change in the fashions was still more marked during this year. The princesse robe had quite gone; costumes were made with jackets, often with a panel in front of a different colour and material, with long revers continuing on the basques, and large pockets with revers. A mantle known as a Carrick was much in vogue; in winter it was made of velvet and had a fur trimming. Very small bonnets with strings tied under the chin were seen during the Exhibition, but it was a departing mode, and warrants no comment. As a matter of fact, it was not seen again after this year.

Various costumes.

Bonnets.

1879-1880. The introduction of the "polonaise" skirt.

The introduction of the "polonaise" came in 1879, and this merits a passing notice. As will be seen by the accompanying plate, the main novelty of the style consisted in two skirts forming one garment, an under one much pleated and embellished, and the other puffed and held in

1879–1880. Fashion in Paris.

position by loops of ribbon. The collar of the bodice was cut extremely low and finished with a ruching of lace which is copied at the wrists. The "polonaise" continued to be fashionable for a couple of years with but slight variations. The skirts, however, were gradually tightened above the knees, and to such extent in some of the exaggerated styles that it was said to be a matter of serious deliberation going upstairs in some of the skirts. The Medici collar was worn with décolleté bodices, and the sleeves were noticeably short and bouffants.

Lingerie.

Lingerie was fast becoming a very serious and important adjunct in the annual expenditure of the lady of fashion, and an astonishing variety of jabots, bows, scarves, frills, and whatnots were sold under the most alluring names at all the big magasins. Liberty and Japanese silks and other filmy fabrics from the Far East were also largely in demand for petticoats and dressing-gowns.

Liberty and Japanese silks.

1881.

In 1881 a distinctly new mode made its appearance, and was destined to last not only for nearly ten years, but also to usurp the place in public favour previously occupied by the crinoline. This new fashion was known as the "panier." It really consisted of two modes in one, for with it went an indispensable adjunct called the "bustle." The "panier" hardly needs a description, as the accompanying plate conveys all that is requisite. The "bustle," however, was another matter, and it would tax the ingenuity of a mere man aptly to describe its mysterious configuration, or the odds and ends which, so it is said, were pressed into service to fill it out to the desired extent. But to sum up, the "panier" looked nothing without a "bustle," and the "bustle" without the "panier" could not be worn—hence their partnership, as it were.

The "panier."

The "bustle."

Popularity of the "panier."

The new style was adopted by high and low, till at last, as may be imagined, the most grotesque proportions and

1879

1880

1881

shapes were given to the feminine silhouette. With the "panier" one notes that a different line was requisite for the figure—a sort of counterbalance, as it were, to the "bustle" is necessary; so the corsets were more cambré, in order to throw the bust forward. Long jackets cut en queue de morne, made of the same material as the skirt, or of broché or other velvet; very tight and long sleeves finished at the cuff with a white frill; and a stiff white collar and tie completed the smart walking-costume; whilst still further to emphasise the drastic change in fashion the hair was no longer worn à l'Anglaise, but high on the head, with a fringe which now makes its first appearance.

1881. Fashion in Paris.

1881-1886. New mode in hair-dressing.

With the advent of the "panier" and its rapturous reception not only by the fashionable world but by the feminine element generally, a new stage was reached, and a halt was called, which allowed time for the elaboration of the details wanting in the first scheme. Spots, stripes, passementerie, lace of every description—Valenciennes, Mechlin, Alençon, Brussels, Chantilly, also English lace from Honiton, Devonshire—were all used to enrich the fashion during the next few years. The balayeuse, a heavy flounce of white lace fastened under the hem of the skirt, was a distinct improvement. It could be easily renovated, and formed an effective if somewhat extraordinary finish. Then the waist-line was increased considerably in length and terminated en pointe both at the back and front. Stiff plastrons, gilets bouffants of various colours, and lace-trimmed revers helped to give variety if not always beauty. Hats of different shapes, but unusually high in form, went with the various costumes. We see the Amazone, Niniche, genre Chapelier, made in English straw with velvet cocarde or aigrette or feathers. Amongst others bonnets appeared again, but they were of a peculiar shape, and were worn with strings which were tied sometimes under the chin, at other

Various fabrics worn.

Improvement in the mode.

Bonnets reappear.

1881–1886. Fashion in Paris.

times under the ear. Short mantles, known as "visites," much ornamented with laces and ribbons, were very much in vogue in different colours from the skirt. Very pointed button boots were much worn in the 'eighties.

Button boots.

Evening dresses.

The evening dresses were often extremely elegant *if* one avoids noticing the inevitable "bustle." The skirts, puffed and decorated with a long square train independent of the skirt; the bodice "décolleté," V-shape, with much lace on it; long kid gloves, couleur suède, scalloped along the edge; shoes with bows to match the dress,—all combined to accentuate the characteristics of the tout ensemble. Hair-dressing was most elaborate and high on the head, finishing with one large, long curl down the back of the neck. A collier of diamonds and much other jewellery completed the effect. This conveys a fair idea of the toilette of an élégante for a ball or reception in 1886.

Reaction in the fashion.

Towards the end of the 'eighties there were signs of a reaction after the fashion which had been in vogue for so many years. The contour of the body was beginning to be indicated with more grace. Walking-dresses, panelled at the side with passementerie and other ornamentation, were characteristic of these years. Hats remained small and extremely inelegant; bonnets were still worse with their wide strings. The hair-dressing was remarkable, and reminds one somewhat of the Marie Antoinette period, its height being increased by an arrangement of tall bows or flowers. The characteristic of the hair-dressing, *like* that of the hats and bonnets, was that everything should be en pointe, with noticeable absence of breadth. Evening dress became much more extravagant than in previous years. A new transparent material called "grenadine" was introduced, and very beautiful effects were produced by draping it over satin gowns and trains. Sleeves of the décolleté bodices had quite disappeared; only three strings

1886–1888. Hats very inelegant.

Hair-dressing.

Evening dresses.

"Grenadine."

1882

1883

of beads or a ribbon were deemed sufficient to satisfy the claims of decency. 1886–1888. Fashion in Paris.

In 1888 we have the first indication of a coming change in the shape of the sleeves; the shoulders were slightly higher and fuller. There were also signs of another modification, namely, the sure decline of the "panier," although the hideous "bustle" was still going strong. The evening dresses were, if anything, still more attractive; the décolleté was cut "en cœur," which was slightly less severe than the V. The hair was still dressed high and finished with a small aigrette or diamond crescent, whilst a diamond-studded velvet band round the neck replaced advantageously the vulgar collier. Fans were still large, but were less obtrusive in shape.

Decline of the "panier."

Attractive evening dresses.

Hair-dressing with aigrettes, etc.

In 1889, the year of the Exhibition, the most noticeable change in the fashion was in the shape of the sleeves, which showed unmistakable signs, in fact some had already a distinct tendency to a return to the "leg of mutton" shape. 1889. The year of the Exhibition.

CHAPTER XVII

1870–1880. Fashion in London.

IT was said that London gained what Paris lost by the fall of the Empire. This, of course, is a statement difficult of disproval, but it is indisputable that there were London hostesses in the 'seventies whose entertainments vied in éclat with those given by the Grandes Dames of the Second Empire. In Eaton Place, at Lady Molesworth's, for instance, the Prince and Princess of Wales used often to dine, and it was there that the fashionable set and the most distinguished personages gathered. The "routs" of Lady Wimborne in Arlington Street were always the talk of the season; Madame de Falbe, the wife of the popular Danish Minister, held high court in Grosvenor Street; the Diplomatic set was to be found at Lady Salisbury's in Arlington Street, or at the Baroness de Brienen's in Great Stanhope Street. At 8, Prince's Gate "Violet Fane" (Mrs. Singleton) played at being a Madame Recamier, and in her Salon were to be seen Lord Randolph Churchill, Gorst, Drummond Wolff, Lord Lytton, and practically all the most famous men of the time. Lord and Lady Coventry used to entertain largely at Queen's Gate Gardens; Mrs. Arthur Kennard's dinners were amongst the smartest in town; Lady Waldegrave's Saturday to Monday parties at Strawberry Hill were famous, but they were mainly political in character. One should also not omit to mention, en passant, Lady Egerton of Tatton's "crushes" in St. James' Square, or Lady

London hostesses.

Brassey's "small and earlies," and Lady Dorothy Nevill's Sunday luncheons; whilst the receptions held by the Duchess of Cambridge, the Duchess of Somerset, and Maria Marchioness of Ailesbury recalled, so it is said, the Faubourg Saint-Germain in its palmiest days—but the list could be prolonged to a much greater extent than space here permits. 1870–1880. Fashion in London.

At these balls, dinners, and receptions would probably be seen more beautiful young women than in any other capital in Europe. The whole of the Victorian era was famous for its beauties, and the fame of Louisa Lady Waterford, Mrs. Thistlethwaite, and Marie Fox, the protégée of Lady Holland, is still recollected.

The 'seventies and 'eighties were notably renowned for society belles, and one need not be very advanced in years to be able to recollect the loveliness of the Duchess of Leinster or Lady Brooke, Lady Londonderry, the Ladies Algernon Lennox, the Duchess of Sutherland, Lady Dudley, Lady de Grey, and Mrs. Yznaga, whose beauty was equally known in Paris and London. The day of the "fashionable beauty" is past—not that there are fewer beautiful women, but that they are not so much en evidence. In the 'seventies and 'eighties the leading photographers did a big trade in the portraits of the belles of society; now their places are taken by "professional beauties," that is to say, the ladies of musical comedy—a change which is perhaps not to be deplored, as it always gave the impression of being somewhat infra dig., and as if savouring of advertisement, this display in the shop-windows and sale of portraits of ladies of society, whose sole claim to public interest lay in their physical attractiveness. Society belles. The "fashionable beauty." The "professional beauty."

London in the early part of the 'eighties was remarkable by reason of certain curious developments of fatuity and snobbishness which are worth recalling, as they represent 1880–1886. Fatuity and snobbishness.

1880–1886. Fashion in London. The "Æsthetic" movement.

distinct types of these years which could not exist under present-day conditions. The "Æsthetic" movement was one of these, initiated by a group of self-styled "beauty-worshippers" who attributed to themselves, on no grounds whatever, exceptional artistic temperamental qualifications for the proper appreciation of the beautiful. The disciples of this cult were mercilessly lampooned by "Punch," as self-advertisement and glorification had palpably prompted the movement, whilst all sensible people treated it with undisguised contempt. Du Maurier's amusing drawings of the empty-headed fool "Postlethwaite" helped finally to consign it to oblivion.

"Punch" and the "Æsthetic" movement.

1886–1887. The "lion-hunter."

The other by-product of these years was almost equally curious in its way—it was the genus known as "lion-hunter." This was the lady, usually residing in Kensington or Bayswater, the ambition of whose life was to be able to invite to her "at homes" or receptions celebrities of the moment, obviously to "show off" before her friends. The ridiculous situations this snobbish idea often brought about were also treated with contempt and wonderful perspicuity by du Maurier. The tribe of "lion-hunters" still exists, undoubtedly, but their operations are conducted with less effrontery than in the 'eighties, probably owing to the fact that dull receptions and musical evenings are getting more and more out of date.

1887. Opening of the Savoy Hotel. A new era in London fashion.

With the opening of the Savoy Hotel in 1887 may be said to have commenced a new era in the life of fashion in London. Up to that time the Metropolis of the world was ill provided with places where entertaining on a large scale was possible, the good hotels and first-class restaurants being too small and badly appointed to be able to cater for such festive gatherings, whilst the second-rate ones were little better than glorified railway inns. With the advent of the Savoy a new feature was introduced in society

1884

1885

1886

1887

entertainments. The larger and more brightly decorated restaurant, run on French lines, which caters not only for business folk in the day-time, but makes a point of attracting ladies for dinners and suppers, now became an institution.

1887. Fashion in London. Restaurants run on French lines.

The shrewd French restaurateur has long realised that to a smart woman the opportunity of displaying her toilette to advantage is of far more consequence than food, for women are not gourmets by nature. Realising, therefore, that, by pandering to her vanity, she would unconsciously help to advertise him, he engages the cleverest and most up-to-date architect, to whom he confides his ideas, with the result that entrances to lobbies in restaurants are designed with a view to giving the élégante a suitable entrée which commands the attention of the whole assemblage. Dressed in the latest creation from Paquin or Laferrière, it is obvious that she does not want to make her entrance unnoticed.

The new type of restaurant.

Before 1887 London fashionable life was the life one led at home; entertaining was done privately. Since those days society has made big strides towards Continental ideas, and to its advantage, as will be admitted by all who can recollect London in the 'seventies and early 'eighties. The type of the woman of fashion has also altered, and beyond recognition during the past twenty-four years. She has emancipated herself from all the silly narrow-mindedness which was the life burden of her grandmother when a girl. Society may be no better now than it was in those far-off days, for human nature remains unchanged, but it is certainly no worse, and without a shadow of doubt it is brighter and more intelligent. Class prejudice still exists, but it is becoming yearly less noticeable.

1887–1890. London life at home before 1887.

New type of woman of fashion.

In what one may term the pre-Savoy days, for an

1887–1890. Fashion in London. The narrow-mindedness of pre-Savoy days.

unmarried lady to be seen dining at any restaurant frequented by actresses was tantamount to losing her reputation, and no man would have ventured to invite a lady to any place where such "low creatures" were likely to be seen. Now, in all the big restaurants and hotels, not only do the belles of the beau monde rub shoulders with the ladies of the stage, but also with the "gilded beauties" of the demi-monde, and they do not appear to be outraged when this happens.

"Gilded beauties" of the demi-monde.

The influences that have changed the modern fashionable woman.

What has brought about this change, this volte face? A variety of causes. In the first instance, the opening of al-fresco entertainments in the summer, on Continental lines, where people can congregate and listen to good music and harmlessly enjoy themselves. In England it takes a long time to upset preconceived notions, and the mere suggestion of the opening of such places as the Horticultural Gardens immediately recalled visions of the results of previous so-called open-air entertainments, which had degenerated into mere resorts of vice and rowdyism.

The Horticultural Gardens and the "Health Exhibition."

The "Health Exhibition" in the Horticultural Gardens at this period proved an unparalleled success, and the beautiful, brilliantly illuminated grounds were crowded every evening with well-dressed and orderly people, who evidently appreciated the innovation. There was no sign whatsoever of the old degeneracy in this new undertaking. The Horticultural Gardens, though eminently adapted for this kind of entertainment, were, however, required for the buildings of the Imperial Institute; the Earl's Court Exhibition was therefore opened early in the 'nineties, and jumped immediately into public favour. The spacious grounds proved an excellent locale for the al-fresco entertainments which London was now beginning to expect in the summer months. Open-air cafés and restaurants, quietly and decorously conducted, became a standing reproof to

Opening of the Earl's Court Exhibition.

1888

1888

1889

1890

1887–1890. Fashion in London.

the assertion that Continental ideas are not adaptable to England, and to the old-fashioned, narrow-minded prudes, whose contention has always been that the morality of the nation can be improved by keeping the sexes rigorously apart. The orderliness and the simple, unaffected enjoyment of the crowds in the gardens have always been the subject of astonished comment by all the foreigners visiting London during the summer.

1890–1892. Sir Augustus Harris and the fancy-dress balls at Covent Garden.

Emboldened by the success of the open-air entertainments, Sir Augustus Harris decided to carry out a long-cherished scheme of his, namely, the introduction of bals costumés at Covent Garden Theatre, on the lines of those held in the Opera House in Paris. They were an instant success, and during the first years of their existence were the rendezvous of the smart set. Masks and dominoes were much worn, and many were the intrigues which found their inception in the boxes and corridors of the spacious theatre, and for several years these balls enjoyed quite a vogue in the fashionable life of London.

1890–1896. Fashion in Paris.

Another reason for the great change one notes at this period from the staid gentility reminiscent of the mid-Victorian times to the more light-hearted Continental tendency, was brought about in no small degree by the advent of the bicycle for women.

The ladies bicycle.

In respect to the bicycle, it was somewhat surprising that, although England had always been the leader in outdoor sports and athletics, it should have been across the Channel that women first took up bicycling. The Parisienne has always been keen on new pastimes and fresh sensations, and therefore the bicycle, which had hitherto been regarded as a purely masculine form of exercise, was introduced in a new rôle as an attractive recreation for women. It caught on at once, and was not long in establishing itself firmly in favour, not only with young

The Parisienne and the bicycle.

1890–1896. Fashion in Paris.

women of fashion, but with every woman and girl who was fond of exercise. The early part of the 'nineties, therefore, saw the bicycle the rage of feminine Paris.

The French bicycle for women, and the bicycling-costume.

The new machines differed in no particular respect so far as build was concerned, except in weight, from those ridden by men. Consequently they necessitated riding astride, and in a costume which put the sportsmanlike character of the Parisienne to the test. Anything more inelegant could not be conceived. It consisted, generally, of a very wide pair of knickerbockers not unlike bloomers in shape, stockings, and high boots or shoes, a simple shirt with collar and tie, and a soft felt hat with no trimming, but placed on the head with that "chic" which only a Parisienne can apply. Nevertheless in this ungraceful garb, when spinning skilfully along the country roads, she presented a thoroughly sportsmanlike appearance which was not without charm.

Fashion in London.

A bicycle for women introduced in England.

In England, women, with somewhat strained ideas of propriety, never dreamed of bicycling till they were offered machines specially adapted for them. Without the introduction of the low, open frame, and the practicability of riding in ordinary costume, it is probable that bicycling would never have become popular in England. From the moment that it was conceded that a lady did not necessarily lose caste because she rode a bicycle, the emancipation of the fair sex began. The rage for bicycling which was the

The London season of 1896. The scene in the Park during the bicycling rage.

feature of the London season of 1896 will not be forgotten. The sight in the Park every morning from eleven till one, when the road from Hyde Park Corner to the Magazine was packed with cyclists, amongst whom were all the ladies of smart society in England, was epoch-making in the history of feminine fashion. The fashion for cycling in Hyde Park died out as might have been expected.

1896–1900. Fashion in London.

The bicycling rage dies out.

Women, once their sporting instincts were aroused, soon

1891

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got sick of wheeling up and down a comparatively short road merely to be seen, and besides which, the amusement was becoming "common." But the impetus had been given, and the results could not be withheld. It was one of the stages in the evolution of the modern woman of fashion, and otherwise.

1896–1900. Fashion in London.

In respect to golf, which also exercised a very considerable influence on the character of the modern woman of fashion, its correlation to the bicycle appears to be evident, as without it many of the links now comparatively within easy riding distance would be accessible only by tedious railway journeys. As is well known, for many years prior to 1896, ladies played golf at St. Andrews, North Berwick, and several other places where there were small links. Many clubs reserved special places where ladies could play. Gradually, however, it was recognised that such restrictions were unnecessary, so now ladies play everywhere, and their championships take place on ordinary links where exceptional skill and knowledge of the game are essential.

Influence of golf on women.

Ladies' golf at various places.

Dress reformers, under the leadership of Lady Harberton and her followers, had attempted sixteen years previously to do what the bicycle now achieved without self-advertisement. The hygienic costume which was considered so outré as to cause her ladyship to be forbidden admission to many restaurants and hotels, was now gradually re-introduced in the guise of the divided bicycle-skirt, and although at first it was looked at rather askance by country innkeepers, it was eventually accepted in quite good faith as indicative of "sporting" and not "fast" instincts in the fair wearer.

Lady Harberton and the dress reformers.

The divided bicycle-skirt.

With the appearance on the scene of a new social life, as it were, the world of feminine fashion underwent a remarkable series of changes. The languid élégante of the

1896-1900. Fashion in London.

old-fashioned school became transformed into a new being, a modern creation evolved from modern ideas. Not content with joining issue with man in open-air sports,

The sporting girl of the new school.

she must have, like him, a club, where, in a privacy that should be different from that of her home life, she could write her letters, receive her friends, male and female, and, if so desirous, remain perfectly undisturbed as long as she wished. It was this that prompted the foundation of the Alexandra Club in 1884, the Empress in 1897, the Lyceum

Ladies' clubs founded.

and the Ladies' Army and Navy in 1904, and many others since. With the change in her ideas there was also an accompanying reaction in her notions of fashion.

Tailor-made costumes.

The tailor-made costume had begun in 1888 to make steps towards an elegance of line and finish which was somewhat unexpected. Ladies' tailors were now to be found in increasing numbers, fully proving that, with the bicycle, other outdoor sports were also claiming the attention of the fair sex, and thereby necessitating special costumes. For morning wear, men's tweeds and cheviots were the correct thing, even on occasions where more dressy costumes would have, a few years previously, been de rigueur. With this practical costume many of the smart women would

Masculine shirt and collar for ladies.

carry out the male effect to the extent of wearing a shirt of masculine appearance, with stiff collar and tie. The effect was unwomanly and calculated to impart a hard, sporting appearance to an otherwise gentle, ladylike demeanour; it had, however, a considerable and popular vogue for some years, and long after it had been abandoned

The "jabot."

by the leaders of fashion, till it was ousted by the "jabot" and the more distinctive feminine embellishments of lingerie.

For the next few years the shape of sleeves appears to have monopolised the attention of the grandes couturières, as we find many varieties put forward in the attempt to

1895

1895

arrive at something definite in style. The manche à gigot still maintained its place in favour, alternating between small and large, and eventually ending by becoming abnormally big when it was on the eve of going out of fashion altogether. In the endeavour to produce original effects the result was frequently grotesque, as is seen in the style of 1890, when it was the fashion to wear sleeves of quite a different material and colour from the rest of the garment. For instance, a navy blue cloth costume would have sleeves of old rose colour velvet with black embroidery, long revers, and a "Medici effet" collar. Can anything more barbaric in taste be imagined? Much jet passementerie on coloured cloth was the fashion, together with appliqué lace-work and brandebourgs.

1896-1900. Fashion in London.

Grotesque styles.

The corsets are characteristic of these years, being worn very tight at the waist, and giving the abdomen undue prominence, which was inelegant, to say the least of it. The "bustle" had disappeared completely in 1893. Very long trains to the skirts, short gloves, small hats, and the hair worn close to the temples, were also typical of the early 'nineties.

Corsets characteristic of the ugly mode.

In 1894 one had noticed that skirts had begun to be worn tight on the hips, and wider at the hem, and in 1896 a new mode for which one was being gradually prepared made its appearance. This time it was the manche à ballon—Anglicè, the balloon sleeve—the bell-shaped skirt, and very small waists. The new sleeve now extended to the elbow only, where it is finished off with small revers. There is a "yoke" to the bodice, which is made somewhat fuller. In the following years attention seems to be gradually drifting from special shapes in shoulders, and there are indications of a return to normal conditions and long tight sleeves with a tendency to fulness at the elbows.

The new mode.

1896–1900. Fashion in London.

The skirt still retains its "bell" shape, which is not inelegant.

The advent of the motor-car.

In the meantime a serious rival to the bicycle in popularity with the fair sex was rapidly coming to the front in England. This was the motor-car, which was destined still further to revolutionise feminine fashion. In the first few years of its existence it was looked upon as more in the nature of an engineering freak than as a vehicle with any potentialities.

The "Self-Propelled Traffic Association."

In the month of April, 1896, Sir David Salomons, Bart., with the assistance of Mr. Theodore Lumley, the well-known solicitor, caused the "Self-Propelled Traffic Association" to be incorporated, with a view to the introduction of a Bill in Parliament to improve the law relating to locomotives on highways. For fully two years before this date, France had enjoyed the advantage of motoring, whilst Great Britain was still labouring under the disadvantage of the four-mile limit, with a red flag carried before the road locomotive.

Locomotives on Highways Act. 1896.

Subsequently, on August 14, 1896, under the ægis of the "Self-Propelled Traffic Association," the Locomotives on Highways Act, 1896, became law. This Act had an immense significance for this country, as it was calculated to reverse all the existing conditions of locomotion, indeed the effects of it are as yet not fully realised.

Women still chary of motoring.

Women were, however, still chary of trusting themselves in the evil-smelling, noisy, and uncouth-looking machine, so for a long time it remained outside the domain of amusement so far as they were concerned. Combustion engines were meanwhile being gradually perfected. Attractive coach-building and upholstering combined to bring motoring as a luxury more tangibly to the notice of the up-to-date London society woman as well as the smart Parisienne,

Motoring in its early years.

1896

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1898

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1900

with the result that by the end of the century this new mode of travelling had so fascinated them that already many had cars of their own. 1896–1900. Fashion in London.

The Boer War, which started in October, 1899, put rather a break on fashion for a time, although when it started it was never anticipated that it would assume the dimensions it eventually attained, or exercise so great an effect on the temperament of the nation. Fashion is so volatile and fickle and so readily moved by surrounding circumstances that it causes no wonderment to note that, with trouble in the air, women's thoughts veered from the superficial to the sedate; whilst it is curious to remark that the general styles reflected the national concern, and military sentiment showed itself in the shape of khaki colouring, which was to be seen in most of the modes at this time. 1899. The Boer War.

The death of Queen Victoria in January, 1901, though perhaps not unexpected at her advanced age, plunged the nation into mourning, and thus ended an era in feminine fashion as well as in English history, which stands out in our annals, not merely by reason of the great space of time it covered, but also by reason of the progress and the number of events of national importance which had crowded the years of her long reign. Mourning garb, therefore, was almost universal, not only for the following year, but until the closing of the war, the enormous losses the British sustained in South Africa being sufficient to explain the total absence of colour and marked fashion in England during the next two years. 1901. Death of Queen Victoria.

The Coronation of Edward VII in 1902, in spite of its having to be unfortunately postponed in consequence of his sudden illness, proved a welcome break after the general depression, and was the signal for the commencement of a new infusion of life into the Court and its entourage, 1902. Coronation of King Edward VII.

1902. Fashion in London.

which was felt in all directions. In spite of the most gloomy forebodings as to the results of the war, and pessimism on the Stock Exchange, trade revived everywhere.

Brilliant seasons.

The following year marked the commencement of a series of brilliant seasons which in their splendour almost recalled the gayest times of the Second Empire. No more sympathetic sovereigns ever stood in the full blaze of public life than King Edward VII and the ever-beautiful Queen Alexandra; King Edward's personality simply took the nation's heart by storm, and with such affectionate regard was he always considered, that it was said the very humblest of his subjects had a feeling of personal attachment to him. The attitude both of the King and Queen had always been more that of friends of their nation rather than sovereigns taking their place as hereditary rulers.

The new life of fashion and gaiety introduced by the Court did not therefore jar on the proletariat as it would have done had the monarchs not been gifted with such exceptional tact. All through the succeeding season, fêtes, balls, and entertainments of the most resplendent character infused almost a Parisian gaiety into the usual monotony London had become so accustomed to during the last few years. At the very commencement of the reign, Queen Alexandra inaugurated a great change in Court functions,

1902–1906. Inauguration of night Courts.

by which Drawing Rooms were to be held at night instead of in the full glare of noonday—a welcome innovation for many débutantes, nervous at the ordeal they had to pass through, of daylight inspection by the populace, on their way to the Palace.

Motoring the grande mode.

During the early portion of the century, motoring was the grande mode with the élégantes of all countries, and, as was only natural, Fashion immediately stepped in and issued her dictates to her votaries, which were to the effect

1901

1902–1906. Fashion in London.

that it was obvious that smart women could not go motoring in everyday attire such as they would wear when out driving or walking in the Bois or in the Park. So, in order to provide for their new requirements, firms sprang into existence who made a speciality of supplying all that was requisite for the equipment of an up-to-date lady motorist. Hats, caps, motor-veils, coats, capes, costumes, gauntlet gloves, goggles, and what not made their appearance everywhere. It is needless to add that in these early years of motoring, cars were always of the open or "touring" type, wind-screens being then unknown. So it was absolutely necessary to protect oneself against wind and weather even for a comparatively short run.

Motor costumes.

Motor-car types.

The "Limousine."

With the appearance of the "Limousine," cars developed interior luxury which was impossible in the old build, and they gradually became, in the more expensive makes, practically boudoirs on wheels, in which the lady of fashion reclines on the softest cushions, and in which flowers, toilet oddments, and electric lamps add still further to her comfort. There is therefore no need for her to take any exterior precaution against the elements in her luxurious car. The "miniature" brougham, that strangely uncomfortable and cramped vehicle which was so fashionable in the 'nineties, seems curiously out of date in comparison with this new creation.

Luxury in cars.

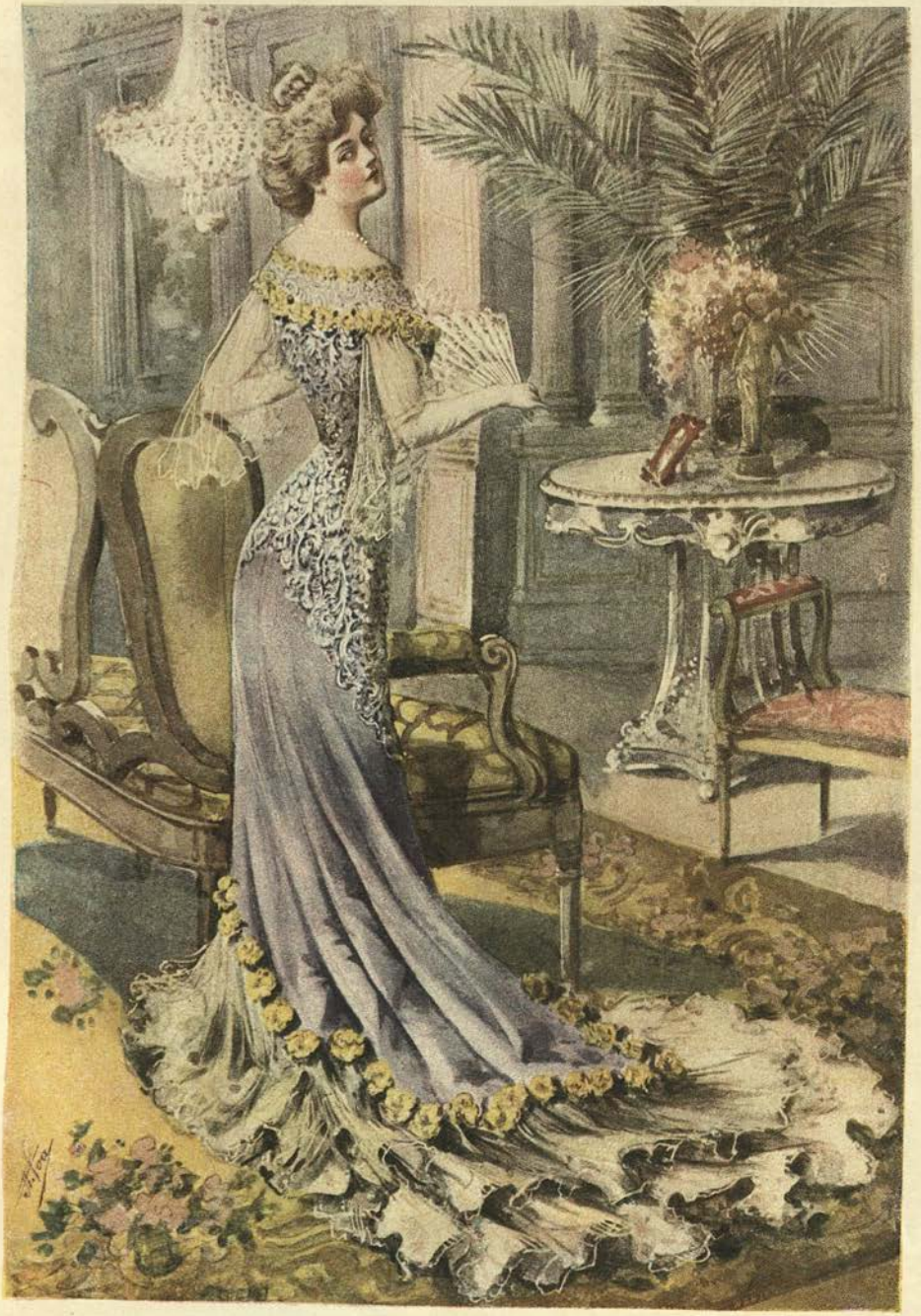
The old brougham.

New mode in motoring costumes. The "poke" bonnet, etc.

With the improvement in the carosserie of the car, there arose less necessity for the heavy and often inelegant costume for motoring. A new mode had therefore to be found, and this time it resulted in a style eminently practical and attractive. The "poke" bonnet of the 'forties was introduced, and proved very convenient in combination with a veil. It was made in fur or straw according to the season. Siberian pony-skin coats reaching to the heels were considered very "chic" in the winter, whilst light

1902–1906. Fashion in London.

tussore silk dust-coats were much worn in the summer. Motoring, however, has so far become purely a commonplace mode of conveyance, that as a "fashion" it is destined to become out of date; but that it will always form part of the occupation of the élégante is of course inevitable, since it is improbable that horses will come into general use again.



1902

CHAPTER XVIII

THE next few years represent a period too recent in our memory to necessitate more than a passing reference. The usual London season, which had in the old Victorian days been confined entirely to the spring and summer months, commencing with the first Drawing Room and ending with the week before Goodwood races, became gradually extended into the late autumn and winter, thus making two seasons. 1902-1906. Fashion in London.

In Paris a change had also come about, for whereas the seasons there had always ended rigidly with the Grand Prix, by retarding the date of this event, the season was proportionately lengthened. Fashion in Paris. The season altered.

But the gay city had become a ghost of its old self. The absence of a Court can never be made up for by official receptions at the Élysée, and the Faubourg Saint-Germain with its Royalist sympathies and relations showed no desire to welcome a fusion with Republican ideas. Paris therefore became divided socially into several sets, that of the official world surrounding the President, the rigidly exclusive Faubourg coterie, and the haute finance as represented by the plutocrats of the Parc Monceau; the American and English division forming quite a colony by itself. Change the gay Capital. Paris divided socially.

Paris life, therefore, had become more segregated than during the days when the Palace of the Tuileries was the hub of its fashionable life, and as a result one notices how changed were its conditions of life. Anglo-mania began to

1902–1906. Fashion in Paris. Anglo-mania reappears.

show signs of coming into fashion once again, and this was evident by the ever-increasing innovations of a distinctly English character, such as "tea-shops," "grill" rooms, "music-halls," and many other unmistakable imitations of English ideas which caught on at once. To the historian this recurrence, at varying intervals, of Anglo-mania amongst our neighbours is not the least incomprehensible of the evolutions of fashion. Paris, therefore, under the new régime had lost much of its old charm; it showed a tendency to become cosmopolitan to an extent undreamed of before, the increasing facility of travel and the erection of huge modern hotels being largely responsible for this new state of affairs.

The Parisienne of to-day

In the meantime the gaiety without which Paris cannot be said to exist continues, but in a distinctly more modified form. Still the Parisienne, with all her innate delightful feminine qualities, is a butterfly not only by nature, but at heart, and her charming personality infuses a note of allégresse into her surroundings, wherever they be. Whether in the Bois, at the races, the Palais de Glace, at "Premières," or any of the numberless rendezvous of her world, the Parisienne stands out pre-eminently as not only the personification of all that is "chic," but also as the embodiment of esprit and graciousness.

Fashion in London. Pageants.

In England at this time a further note of novelty was introduced in the shape of historical pageants, which were held in various parts of the country, starting with one at Warwick Castle, and concluding with one near London. In these displays, in which many thousands of performers gratuitously offered their services, and in which many ladies of fashion took part, the proceeds were devoted to charity.

1906. Revival of rinking.

The year 1906 is noteworthy on account of the remarkable revival of roller-skating, which, after a lapse of

1903

1904

nearly thirty years, suddenly sprang into favour again with women. It is difficult to explain this extraordinary return into vogue of rinking, but within a comparatively short period of the revival, rinks were opened in almost every city of importance throughout the world, and it is probably no exaggeration to state that the furore for this inane pastime during the next three years quite eclipsed the boom of the 'seventies. In London there was skating in every quarter—the vast floor-space of Olympia was crowded every day, and one saw the smartest of society women amongst the whirling throng. Like, however, most sudden fits of fashion in the Metropolis, rinking does not appear destined to remain permanently as a social attraction, and in spite of the establishment of a select Sunday Club on the lines of Prince's Ice Rink, it is doubtful whether it will enjoy a lengthy vogue.

1906. Fashion in London. Rinking.

In Paris for a time the craze caught on with equal vigour, and at the huge building in the Rue Saint-Didier on certain days one always saw "tout Paris" in all its smartness.

Rinking in Paris.

In Paris, however, as in London, the novelty gradually wore off, and but few rinks survived a third season, in spite of carnivals and strenuous advertising.

The novelty gradually wears off.

The craze, curiously enough, evolved no new fashion, as had the previous boom of roller-skating, the tailor-made costumes and short skirts already in vogue being admirably adapted for the pastime.

The annual costume balls which had been started by the Chelsea Arts Club many years previously now began to achieve importance, which caused much notice to be attracted to them, with the result that, from starting originally in a very unostentatious manner, the club found itself obliged to transfer the locale of their annual festival to the Albert Hall. The success of this ambitious move

Costume balls of the Chelsea Arts Club.

1906. Fashion in London.

was beyond doubt; neither London nor Paris has ever witnessed a more gorgeous spectacle than is offered by these annual costume balls, the Shakespeare one of 1911 being quite the most remarkable of this kind of revelry, which infused into the social life of the Metropolis a new spirit of Continental gaiety and merriment without any suggestion of an undesirable element.

Fashions during these years.

The annual horse show held at Olympia had now become one of the principal events of the London Season, more especially by reason of the feminine element taking an active interest in it; and huge crowds were attracted by the novel spectacle of well-known Society women giving public exhibitions of riding and driving in the arena. The English hunting woman and lover of horses was always a type *per se*, little affected by the dictates of fashion, and, in spite of the popularity of motoring, there are no signs of her disappearance.

The Gibson girl.

About this time an American black-and-white artist, Dana Gibson, had come very much to the fore with a type of up-to-date American girl of his own conception; this type became immediately popular, and the Gibson girl was at this moment as much in vogue as was the du Maurier girl of the early 'seventies. His drawings are too well known, however, to need more than this passing reference, but as inaugurating a distinct type of the period, they cannot be omitted in a description of feminine fashion.

The American girl.

The American girl, a product of an advanced and comparatively young nation, embodies in her type charming characteristics which give her a marked individuality, quite of her own, and these have been most ably caught by her clever interpreter.

About 1906 one notes the introduction of the bolero, and a tendency towards a return to the old princesse robes. The waist-line is higher from this year, obviating the

1905

1906

necessity of wearing a belt, and thus giving the body more freedom of line. At this period also a new mode for evening dresses was introduced; mousseline de soie, voile, and other soft materials "plissé soleil" producing very beautiful and graceful effects, whilst, for morning dresses, the box-pleat was much in vogue. A new mode was en l'air in 1907, for one remarks the skirts are gradually becoming tighter. This tendency towards what eventually developed into the tube skirt of 1910 was very marked during the following years, with more or less eccentric effects. In the meantime the waist-line had been getting higher, till at length we have the costume of the Waterloo period, including even the head-gear, with but very slight modifications.

1907. Fashion in London.

Corsets, in the meanwhile, had gradually become more rational; the hideous stays devised fifty years ago by corsetières without the slightest notion of hygienic principles, now developed into the modern "corset," eminently fitted for the new costumes, and to satisfy the increased medical knowledge of women with regard to the laws of Nature. This step alone is sufficient to mark these years as a red-letter period in feminine intelligence; and that there should be any return to the old style of whalebone cuirass seems highly improbable, whatever the dictates of Fashion.

The new costume still further reminded one of the First Empire period, by reason of its necessitating the almost entire abandonment of the petticoat, and in connection with this it may be of interest to recall en passant the short-lived attempt both in Paris and in London to introduce the jupes culottes, otherwise the "Harem" skirt. Like, however, the attempts of Mrs. Bloomer and her rational costume, this new style, graceful and up-to-date though it aimed at being, met with no response from the feminine world.

In 1907 King Edward made his historic journey to Paris which was to culminate in one of the principal

1907. The historic journey of King Edward VII. The entente cordial.

achievements of his career, namely the rapprochement with France, and the entente cordiale, which materialised into the Franco-British Exhibition held at Shepherd's Bush in 1908. It can be safely asserted that this date marks an epoch in modern English history, and was fraught with immense possibilities for the future. The Exhibition at the "White City" was the most successful of its kind ever arranged in Great Britain, and attracted an enormous crowd of visitors from abroad. The sights witnessed in London in that year will probably never be forgotten. Such scenes of gaiety in the Metropolis recalled the palmiest days of the times of Louis Philippe. From this moment may be said to have commenced, not only a political, but a social entente cordiale of the world of fashion between Paris and London, which has only strengthened as time has gone on.

1908–1910. The "White City."

The sympathetic personality who brought all this change about was not destined, however, to enjoy for long the fruits of his labours, and those sad days when England learnt to its amazement that Edward the Peacemaker was suddenly lying at the point of death are of too recent occurrence to require recapitulation. The death of the King on May 6, 1910, brought out such a spontaneous display of public grief as has probably never before been witnessed in any country in the civilised world. As if by a wave of the magician's wand, in one night, the whole aspect of the country was changed from gaiety to gloom. Shops which the previous evening were blazing in the brightest of spring colouring appeared on the following morning with awe-inspiring spontaneity in sable garb. The whole people, from the highest to the lowest, took upon themselves to assume mourning, as though for a personal friend, and the year following was quite unmarked by any entertainment, and fashion was consequently unnoticed.

Death of King Edward VII.

General mourning.

1907

1908

1909

1910–1911.

It was remarked at the time by a foreigner that English-women never looked better than during these months of mourning, a comment which was probably called forth by the fact that to the fair English type black is eminently more suitable than colour, for which she has not an inherent discrimination, nor natural taste; but this en passant. "Le Roi est mort! vive le Roi!" The year of the Coronation of George V was marked by a series of brilliant social pageants, which more than ever confirm one's belief that the English have been maligned when described as taking their pleasures sadly. Give them the opportunity, and they will disport themselves quite as merrily as their gay neighbours across the Channel.

Foreigner's comment on English-women in black.

The Coronation of King George V.

In England, as we have already remarked, the mode is usually represented by the jeunes filles, and nowhere is this mode more delightfully manifest than up the river during the season. On a fine Sunday morning, Boulter's Lock presents a spectacle of youthful beauty and becoming costumes which has always excited the admiration of the visitor from abroad, and which no other country in the world can equal. If she has any pretensions to good looks and figure, the English girl looks positively bewitching when reclining amidst soft cushions in a punt, and the most simple dress then appears more attractive than the most up-to-date French creation.

The mode in England.

Youthful beauty at Boulter's Lock.

Ascot holds its place par excellence as the smartest and most fashionable function of the London season, and for elegance and beauty the scene in the Royal Enclosure or the Paddock on Cup day certainly equals anything the Continent can display, whilst the coup d'œil is probably unsurpassed by any other racecourse in the world. Longchamps, Auteuil, Chantilly, or Maisons Lafitte present scenes of fashion pure and simple, which are undoubtedly most attractive; but for aristocratic elegance Ascot is unapproachable.

Ascot.

1910–1911. Cowes week.

Regatta week at Cowes shows us the English society girl in another aspect. See her in the High Street on a breezy morning, in her trim tailor-made blue serge suit and simple straw hat or cap, with the wind tossing her fair hair and imparting the blush of health to her cheeks, and you see the personification of the daughter of Neptune. It is thus especially that the English girl holds her own triumphantly against all comers.

Fashion of to-day.

Fashion now has become so cosmopolitan, that although Paris is still the headquarters of La Mode, she is seen equally well in Bond Street, Fifth Avenue, the Unter den Linden, the Corso, or the Prado. The élégantes, however, of tout Paris are not the leaders of fashion in the sense they were formerly. They no longer acquiesce blindly in the dictates of the autocrats of the Rue de la Paix or the Place Vendôme, but show more and more a tendency to hold themselves back from adopting or popularising any fanciful styles that may be represented to them under the guise of fashion. They have realised that to be in the fashion pure and simple is impossible, as the modes in our days have become so heterogeneous as to resolve themselves into mere matters of individual fancy. With suggestions of the panier modernised, and a distinct penchant for the Directoire and Empire styles, intermingled with a reminiscence also of the early Victorian times, we see the élégantes of to-day able to be in the height of fashion whilst adopting the most divergent of styles.

Every leading house nowadays has its genre, in other words, its own style, as, for instance, Paquin is not like Laferrière, or Doucet like Vincent-Lachartrouaille, or Reboux like Camille Roger, or Worth like Redfern. And this is the keynote of modern fashion, for La Mode at the present time is an expression of no particular period, and of no definite style, and every recurring season empha-

1910

1910

1911

sises this the more strongly, and makes it the more difficult for the historian to follow it in its increasingly diversified fancies. 1910–1911.

With the conclusion of the first decade of the twentieth century the world may be said to have entered on a new era, an era of hustle and excitement, when every year practically brings forth some new cause for amazement or an eight-day wonder. What in 1912 appear as trivialities would have been considered events five-and-twenty years ago. The result of continually living at high pressure has reflected itself not only in feminine fashion, but also in feminine character. In the feverish rush to get through her engagements, the modern élégante has but little time except for dining in restaurants, motoring, bridge, and week-end visits. In the most giddy times of the Second Empire she never lived at so rapid a pace as she does now. 1912. The modern woman.

And with all this the trend of her ideas has likewise altered, beyond all measure in other directions; in literature, for instance, the passing of the three-volume novel was perhaps but a milestone on the way, but it was a sure indication of the times, and with it disappeared at any rate from the ken of women of fashion the love for the ponderous and verbose which once made such an appeal to the smart subscribers of Mudie's Library. "Tempora mutantur nos et mutamur in illis." In our days, in this strenuous age of motor transit, when rapidity is the essence of everything, her literature must be light and of easy reading, or she has no use for it, and she has practically little time even for such. Her penchant is for the works of Marcel Prevôt and Henri Lavedan rather than for those of Georges Ohnet or Alphonse Daudet, for Elinor Glyn rather than for George Meredith. It is the age of cigarette-smoking, of halfpenny illustrated papers, and ephemeral

1912. literature which can be glanced through and digested without mental effort.

As with literature so it is with the theatre; the irresistible march of time has unmistakably transformed her thoughts in this direction. The social problem play is but one outcome of this transition—everything must be modern and up-to-date to be able to appeal to her; revivals in anything but modes are foredoomed to failure—youth and modernity are the pass-words of the day, and as a result it is no longer the fashion for woman to grow old gracefully as did her grandmother. So one sees everywhere perennial juvenility and mothers looking as young as their daughters, whilst the idea of acting as chaperon would probably be hailed with derision, if indeed one could find the woman who would admit to being of the necessary age for so uncongenial a task.

Notwithstanding this advancement of ideas, however, woman remains the same, as easily influenced by her caprices and inconsistencies as in the beginning when she practically had the Garden of Eden to herself, and only a solitary man to subjugate. One might be tempted to hazard conjectures as to the realms she may still further attempt to enter and conquer, and the trophies she may even yet attach to her triumphal car in her unswerving progress through the ages.

At this juncture, however, we must take leave of her, for it is obviously outside the scope of this work to attempt to prophesy what surprises Dame Fashion may have in store for us, though it may be safely surmised that the feminine world both of fashion and dress is not likely to remain stagnant for dearth of ideas or initiative.

APPENDIX

1802

1806

1806

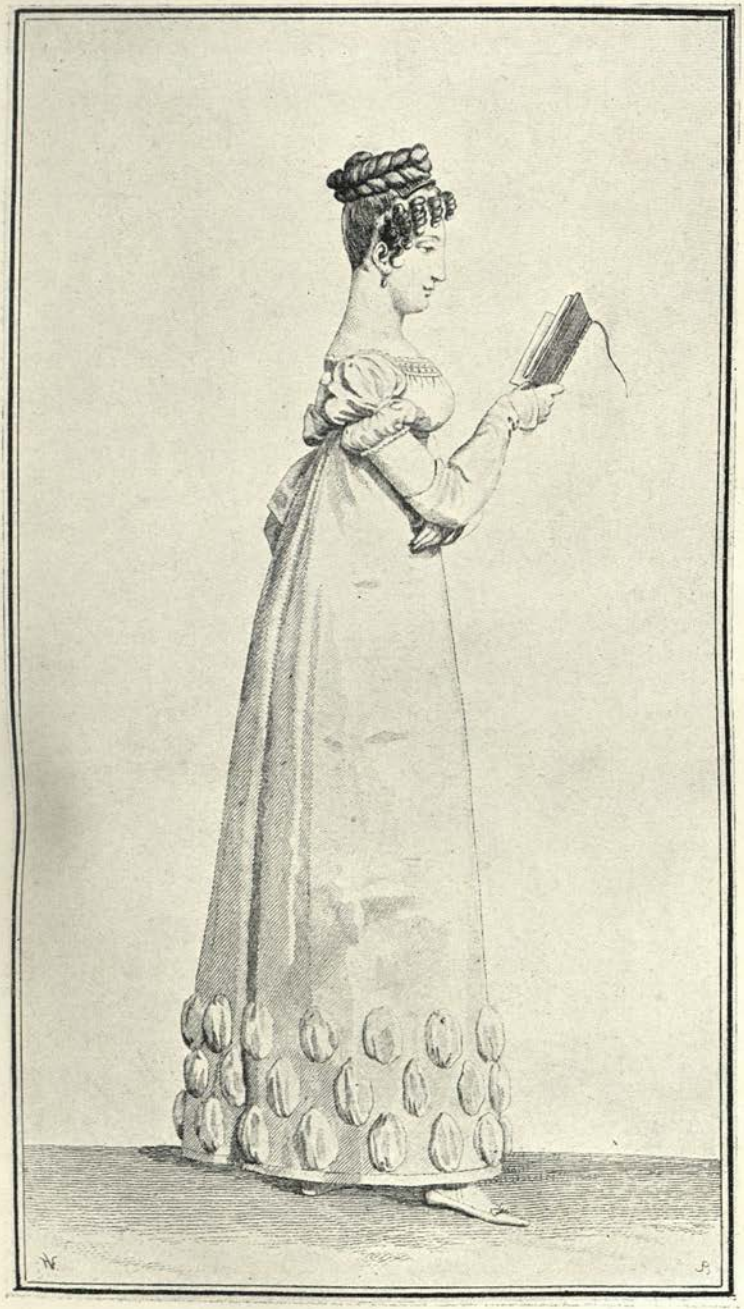
1806

1807

1807

1808

1, Chapeaux de paille. 2, Capotes de Perkale



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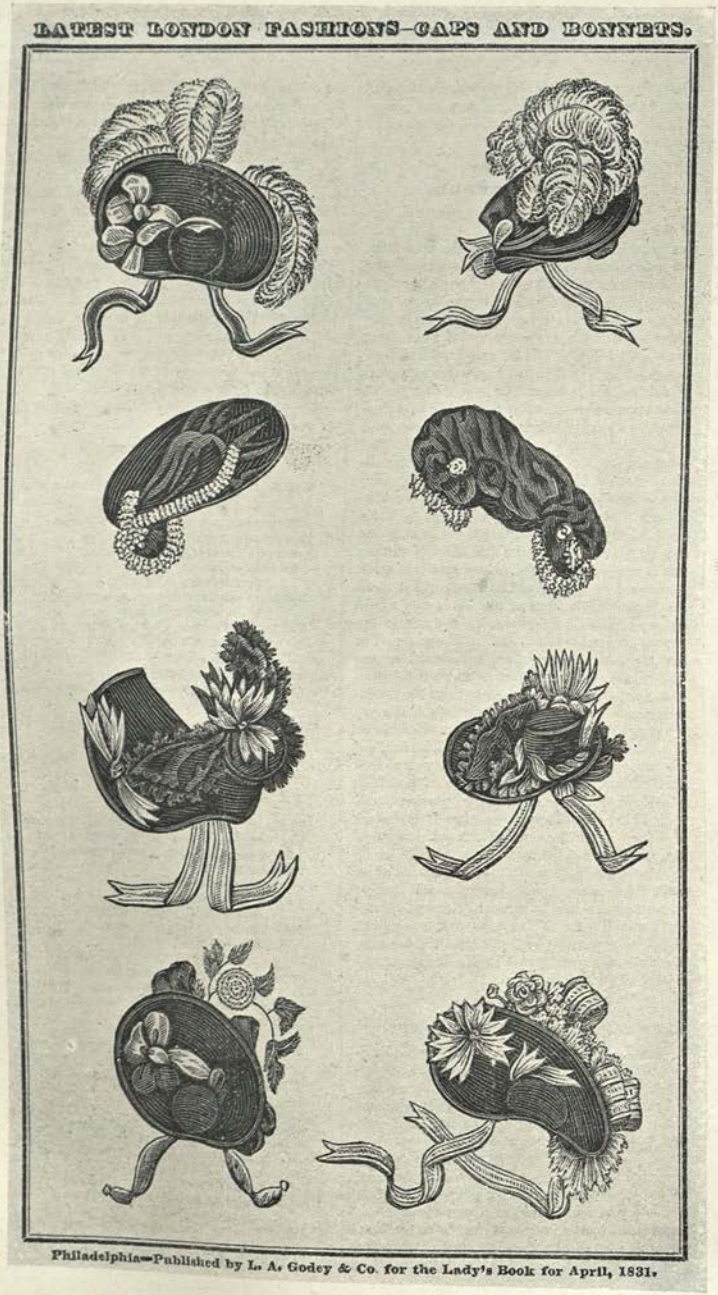

LATEST LONDON FASHIONS—CAPS AND BONNETS.
Philadelphia—Published by L. A. Godey & Co. for the Lady's Book for April, 1831.

1837

1849

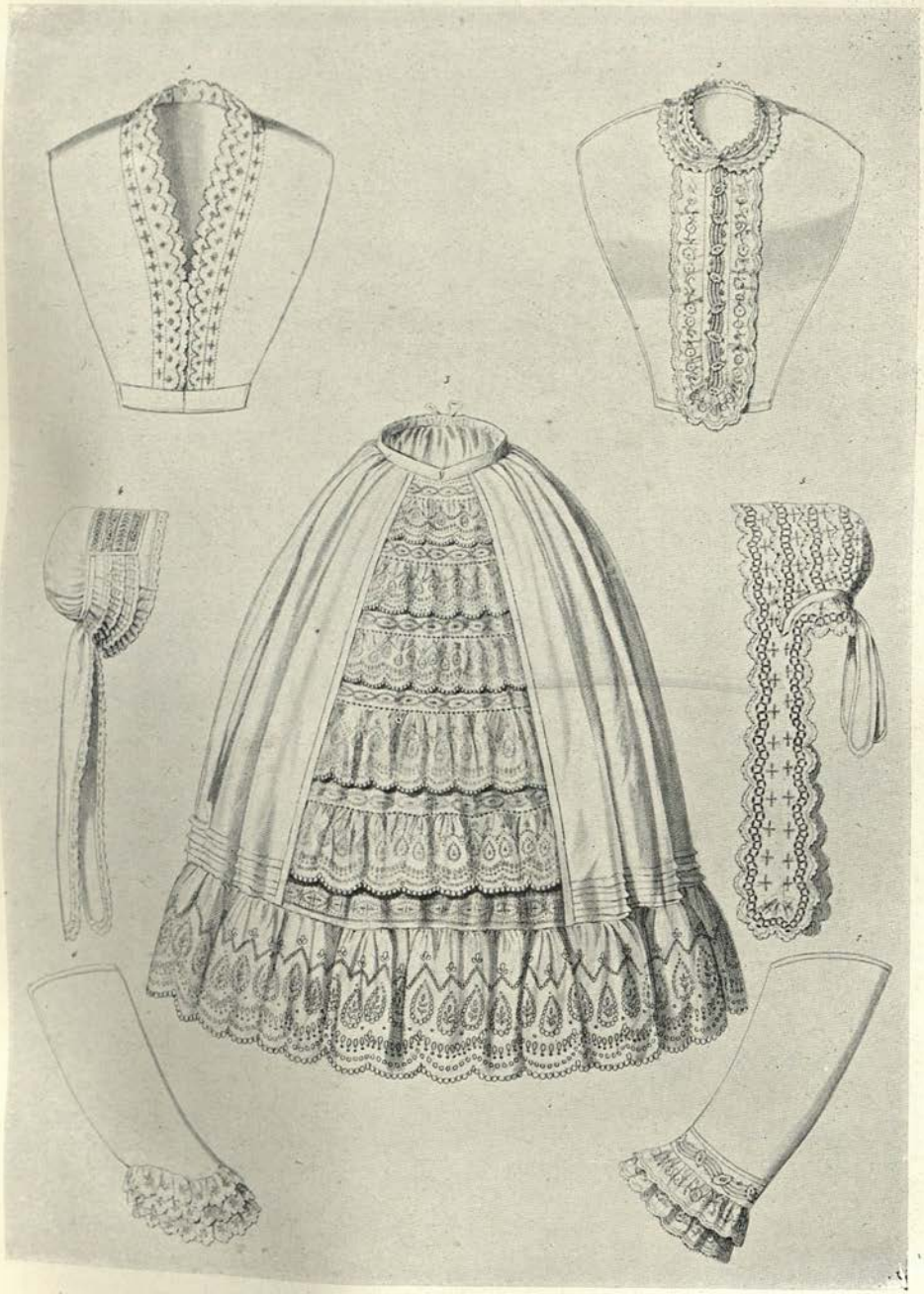
1846

MONDE ELEGANT
Longchamps.
Rue Montmartre 171.
Mars 1839.

A BALL IN THE CHAUSSÉE D'ANTIN

Drawing by Gavarni

1838



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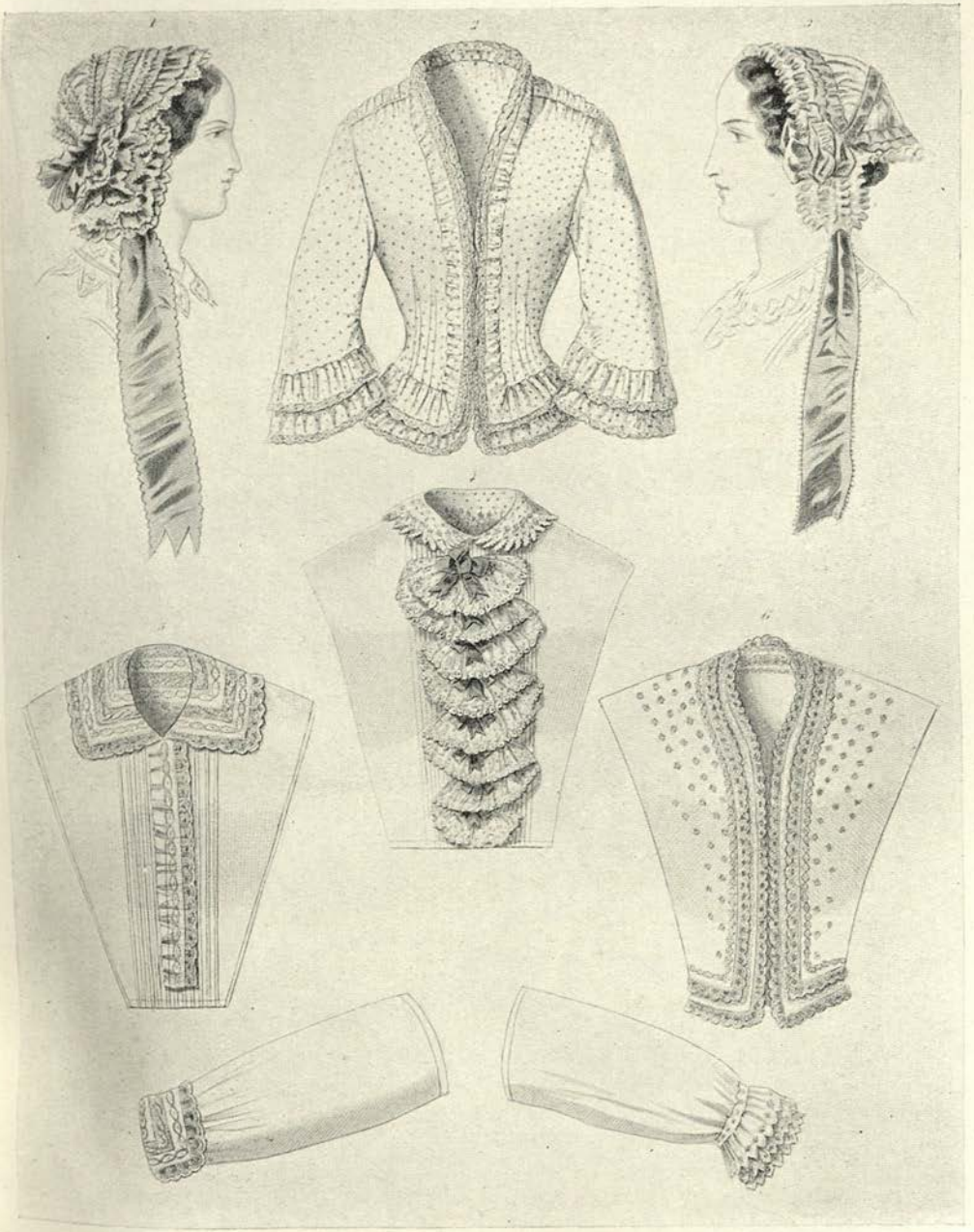

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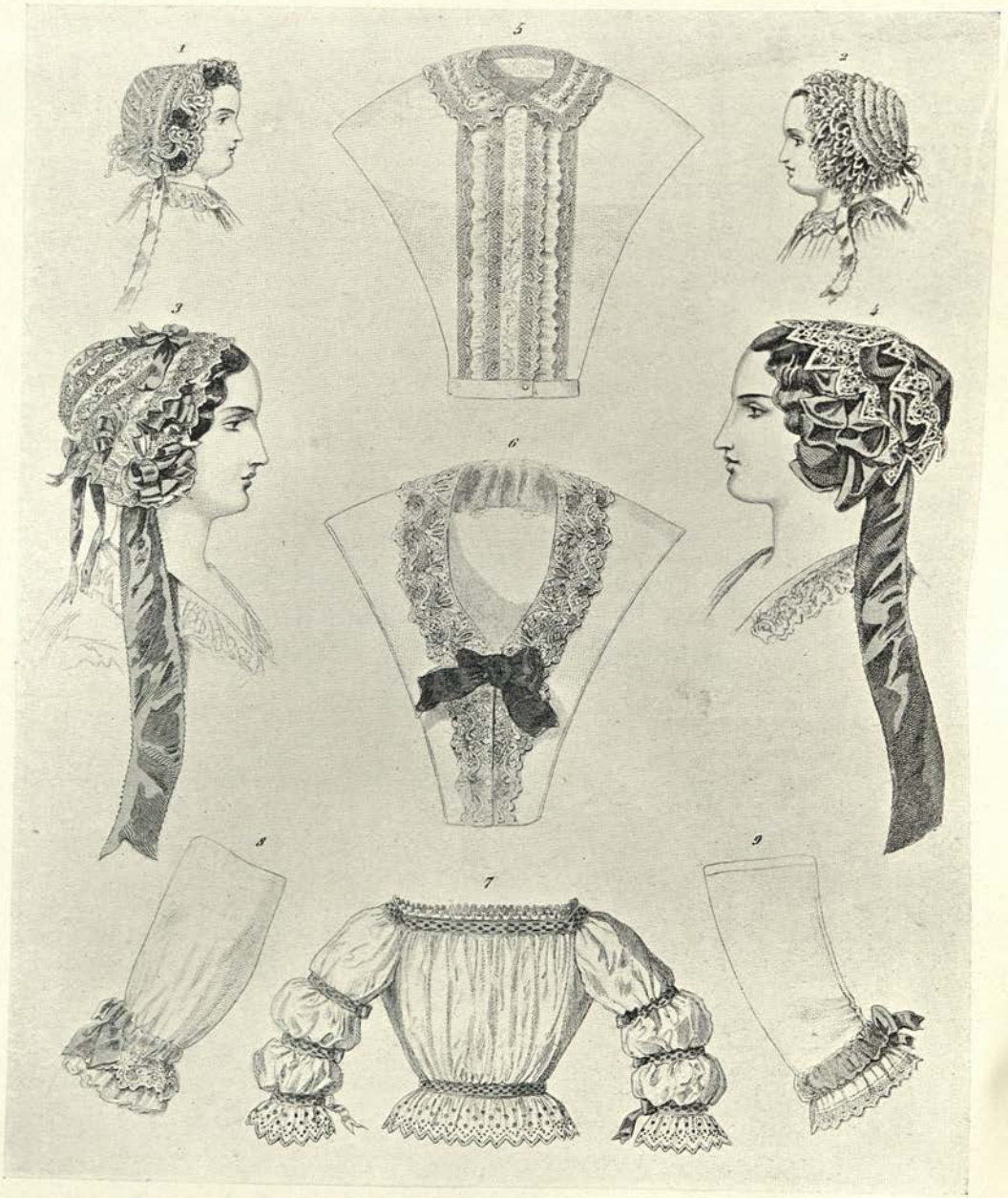

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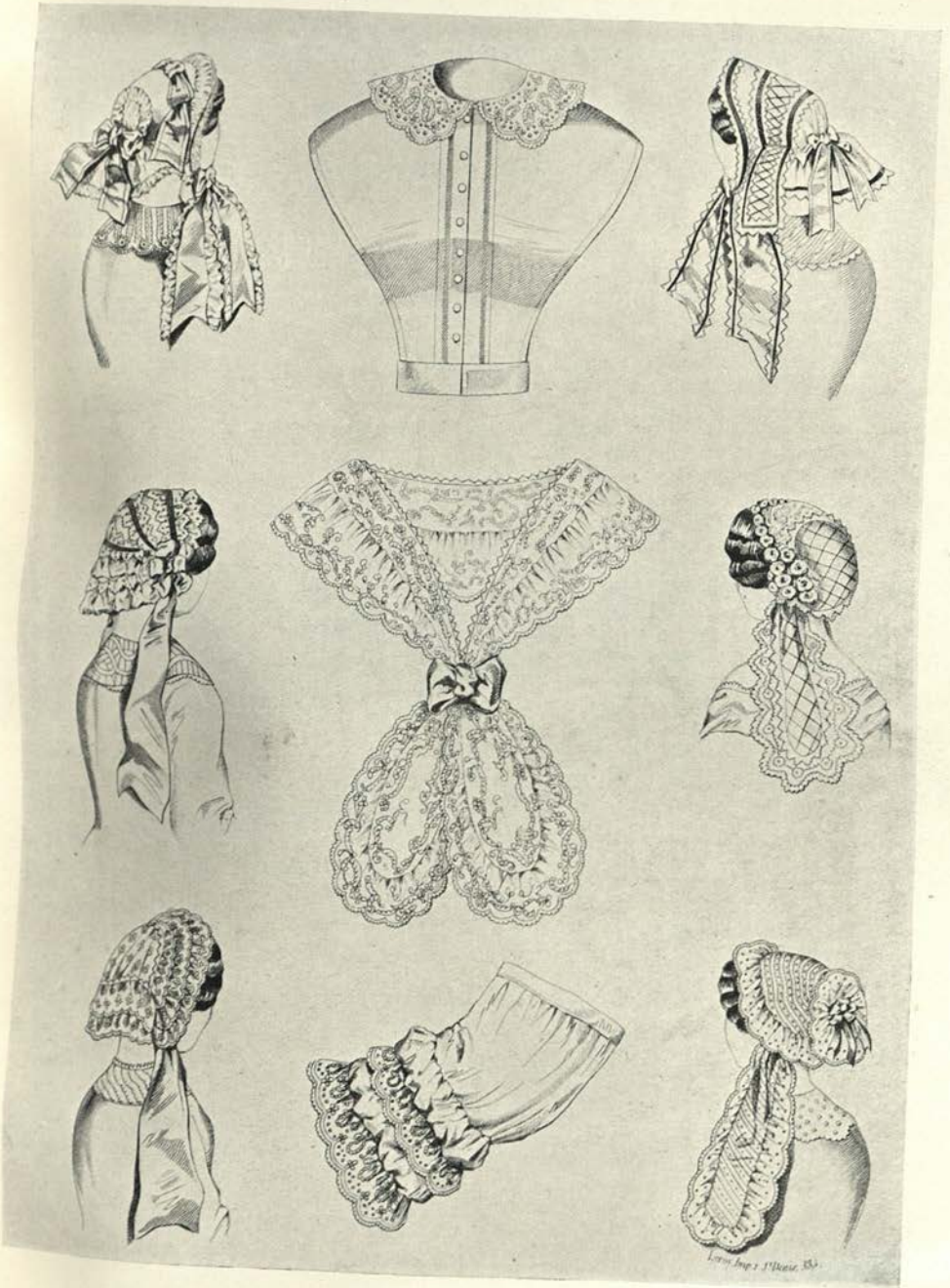

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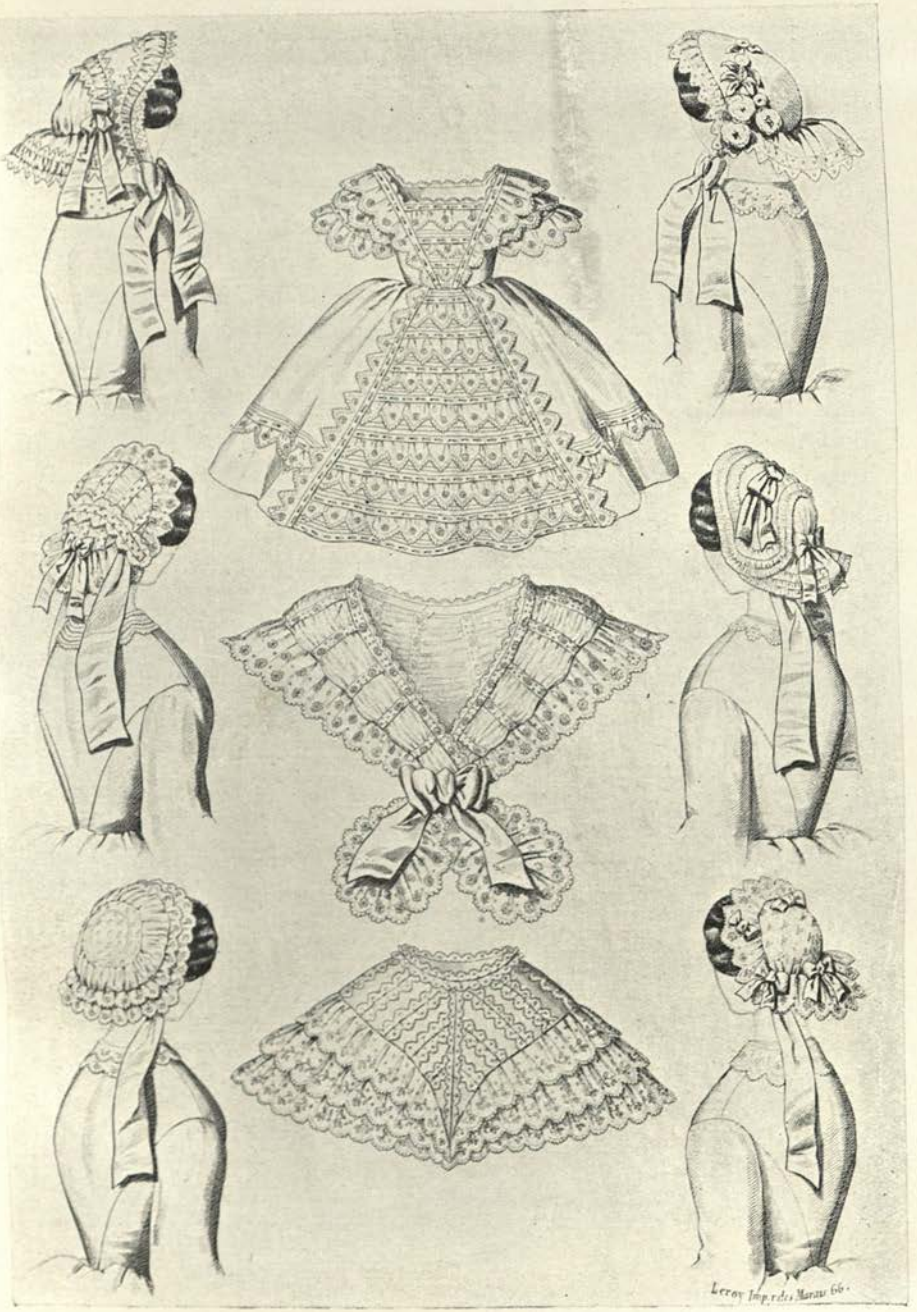

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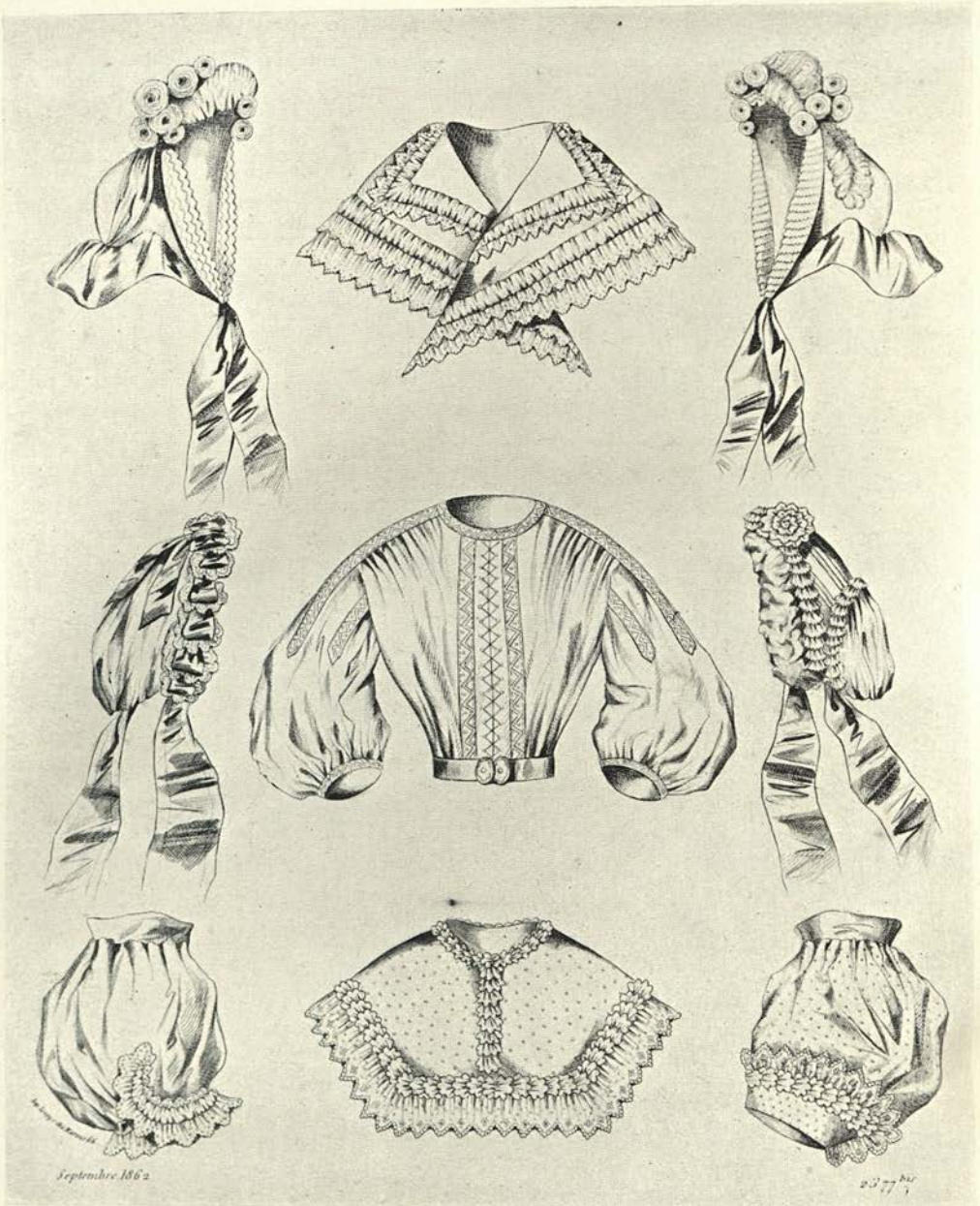

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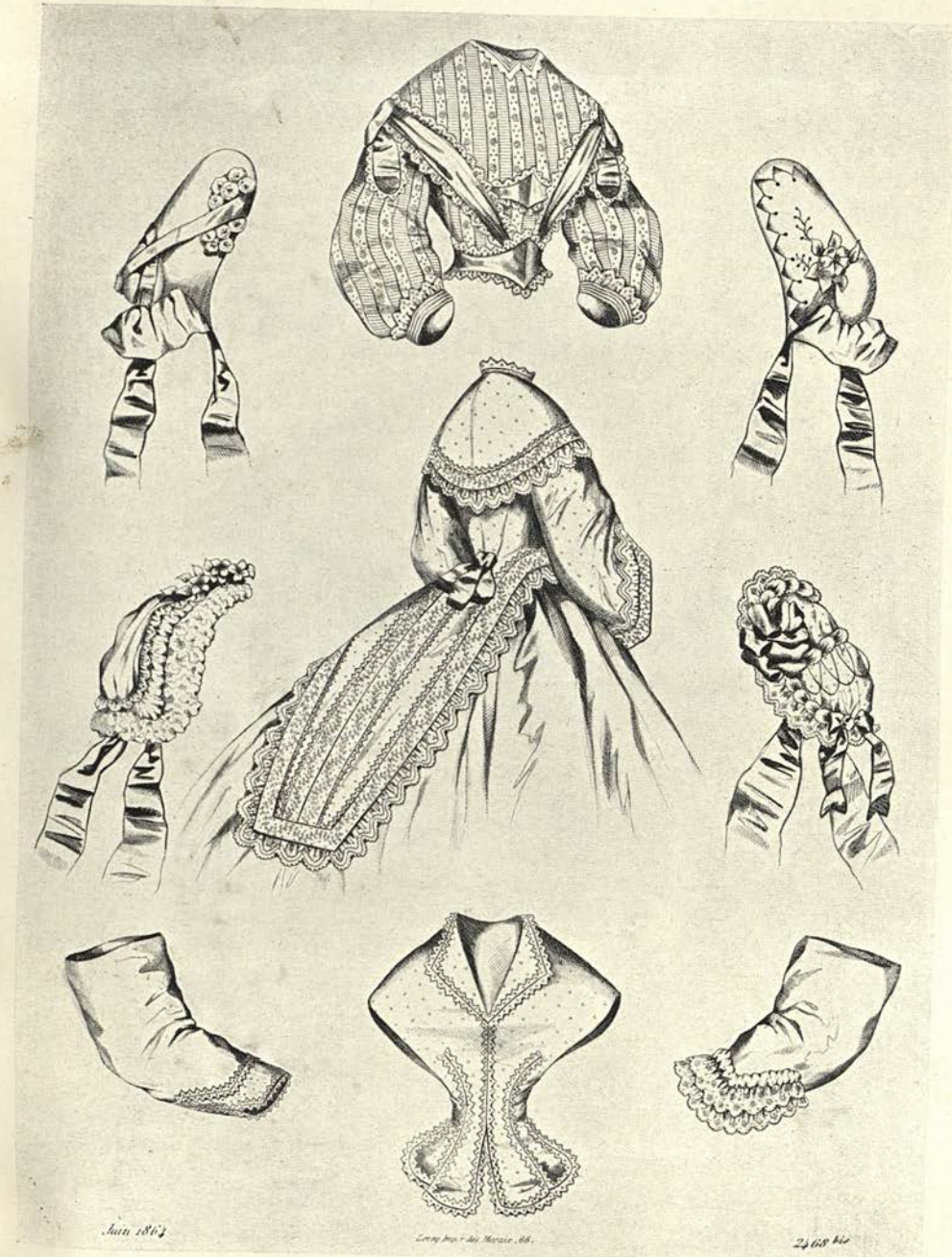

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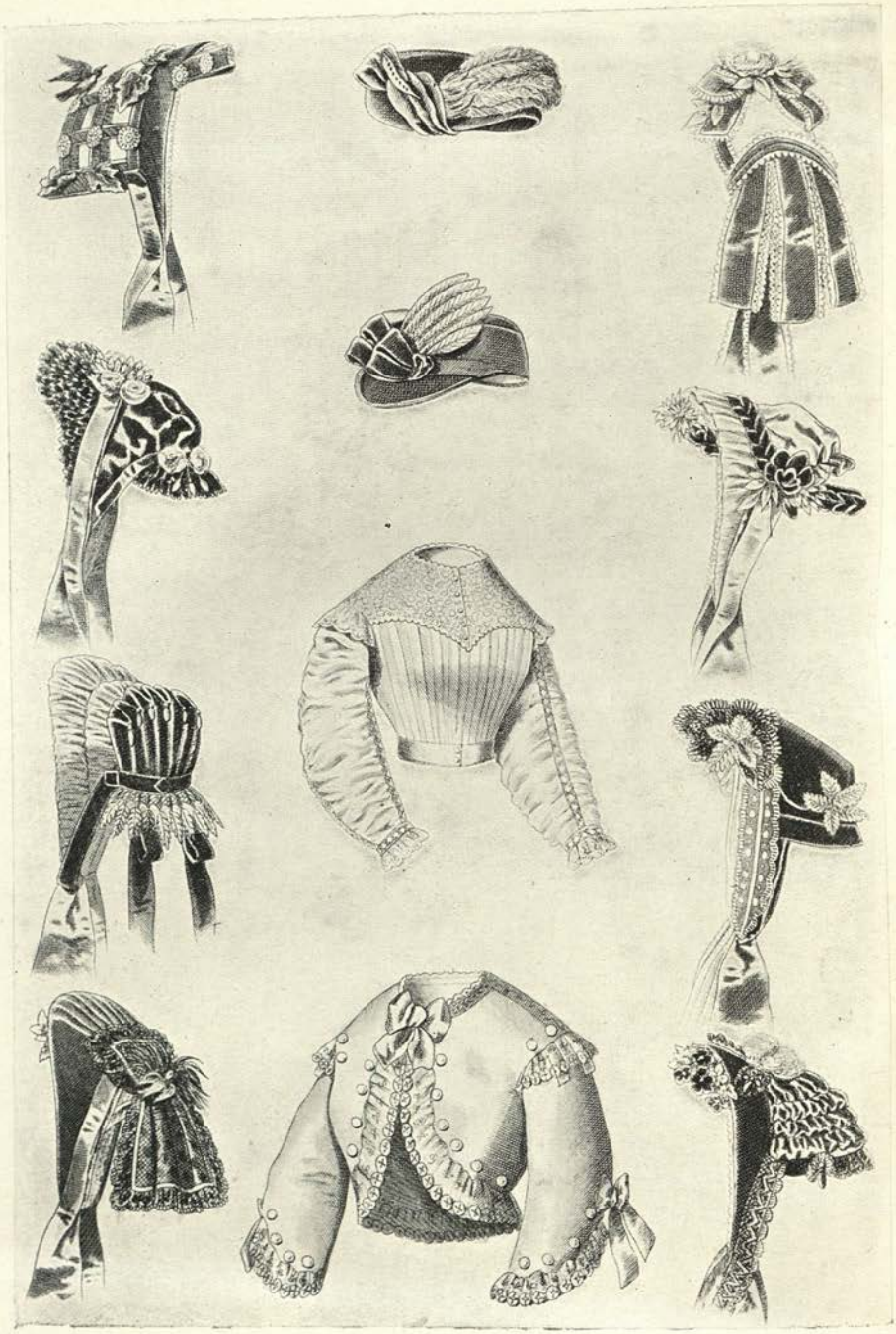

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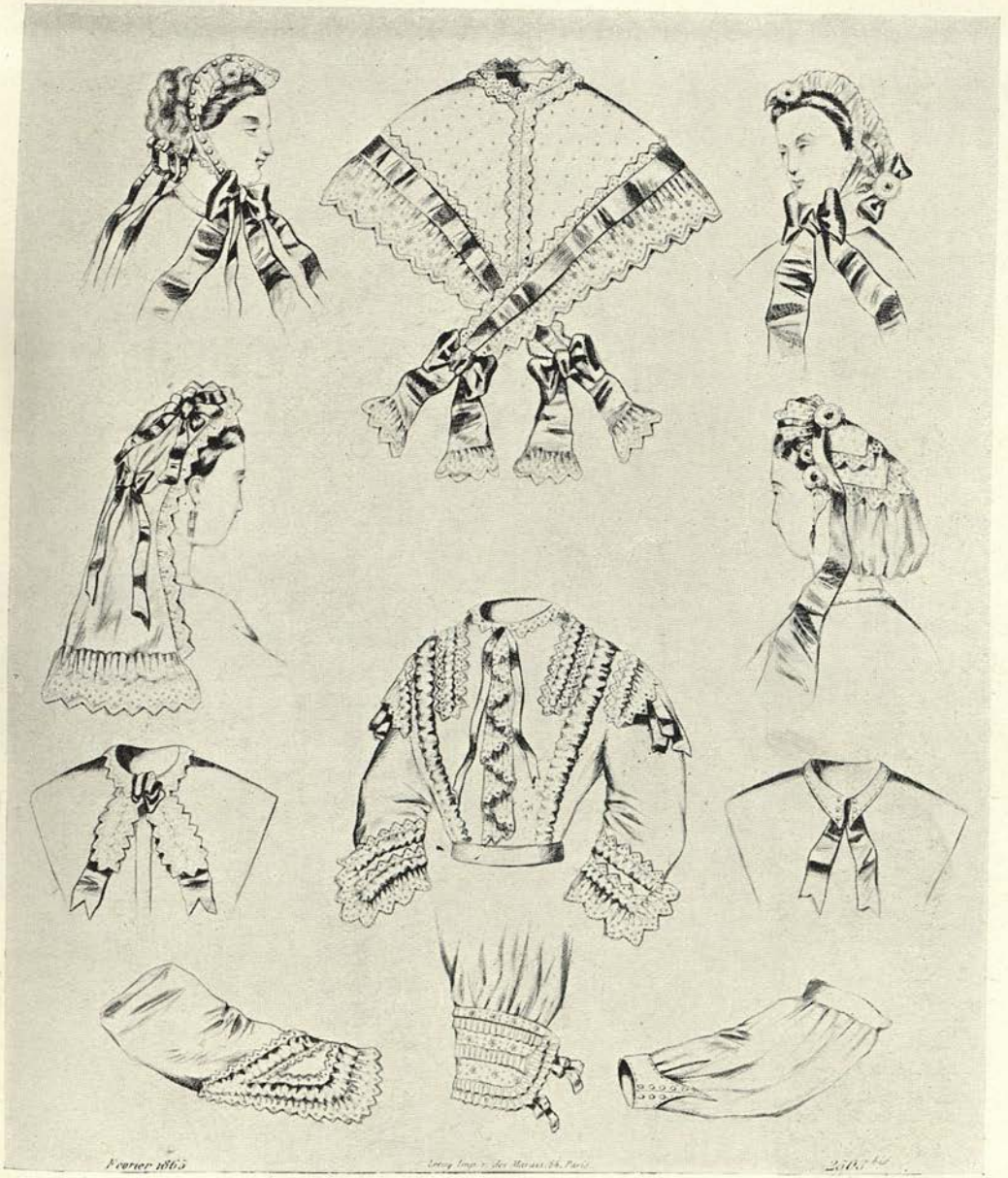

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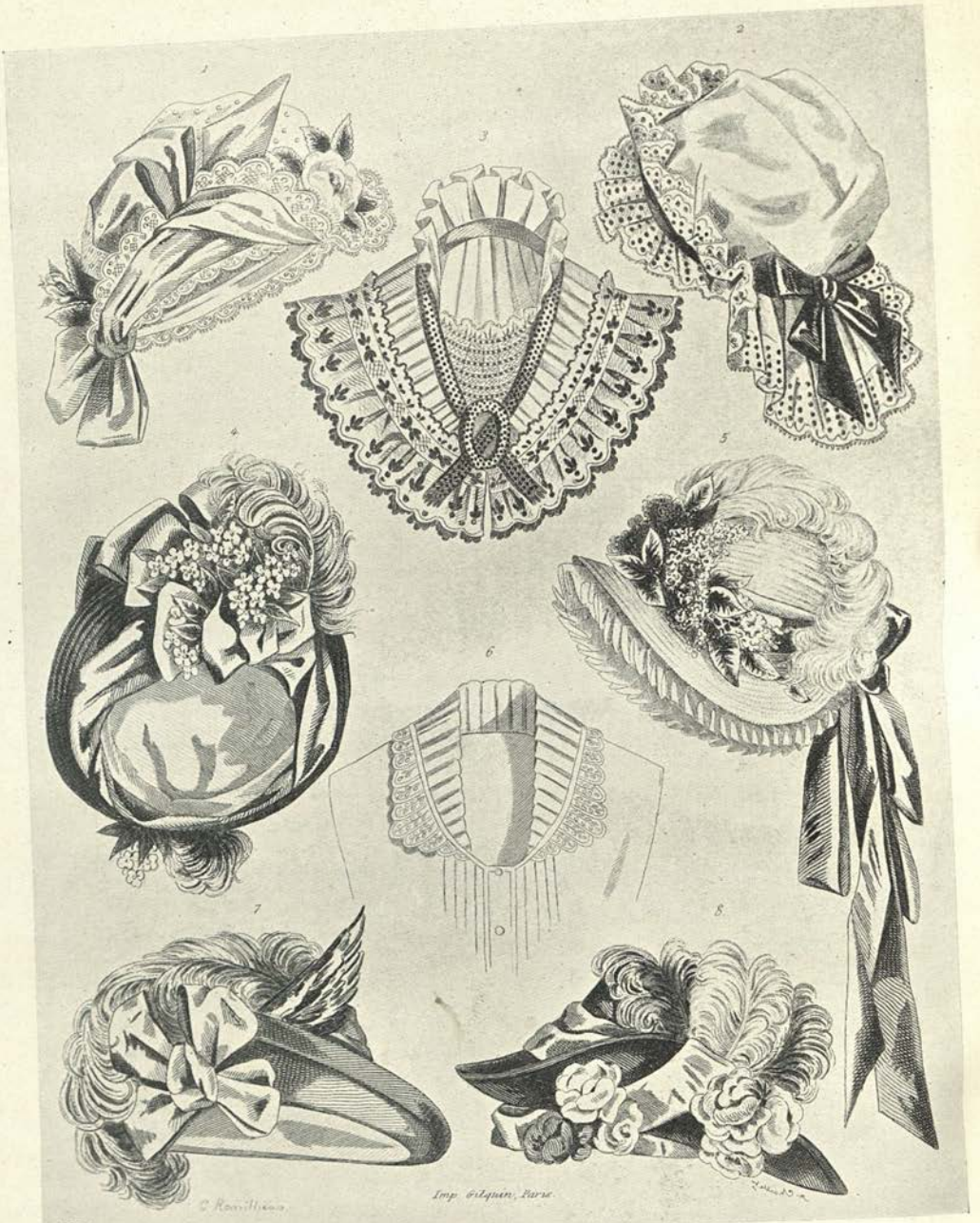
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C. Rouillard
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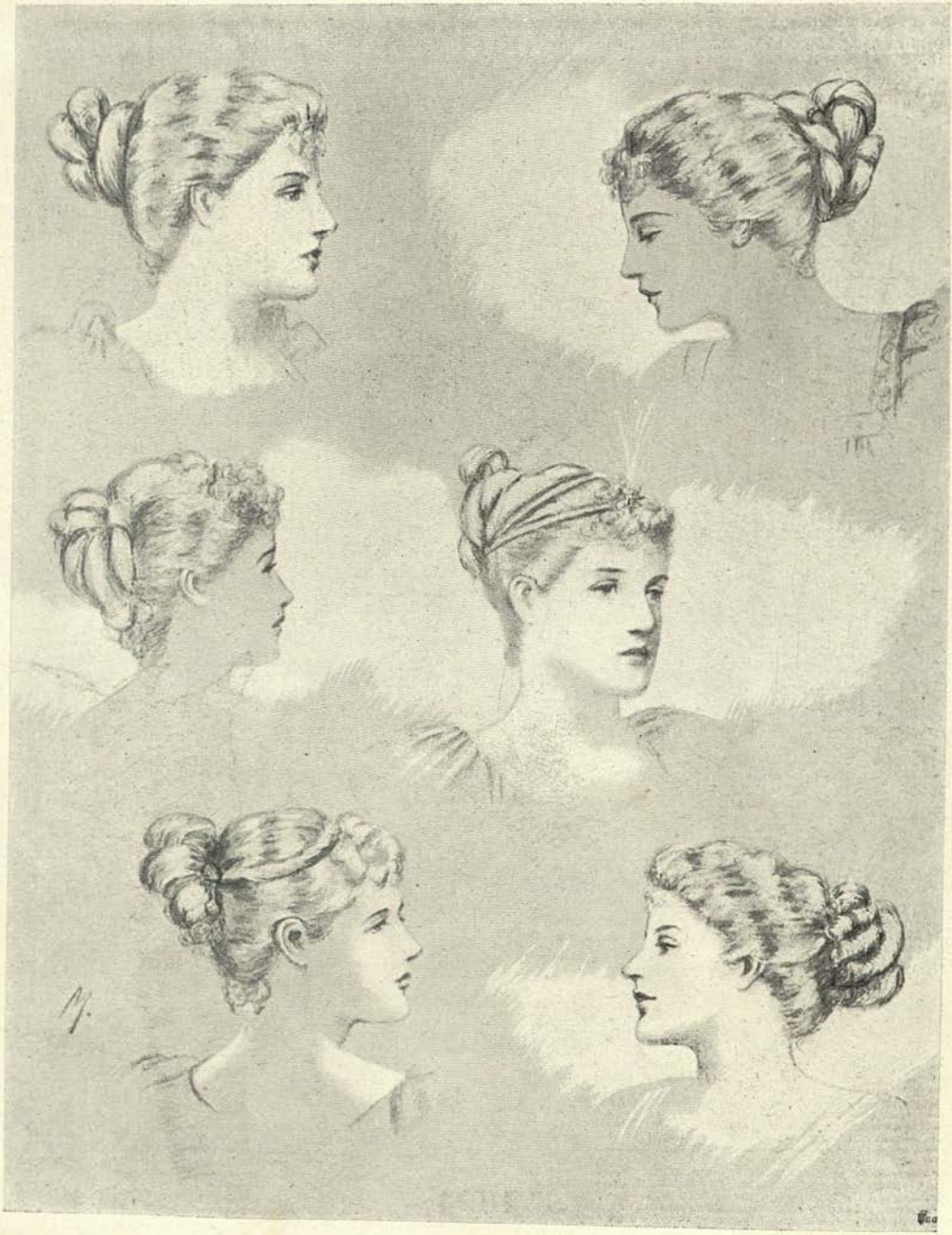

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